

RET's Ninth Annual
Worst Book of the Year Awards

William McGurn
Clerical Tomfoolery

THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR®

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NO. 3

Edith Efron: The Big Cancer Lie

Joseph A. Califano, Jr.: The Real Irving Kristol

The Sickness of Comrade 'Dropoff
by Adrian Karatnycky



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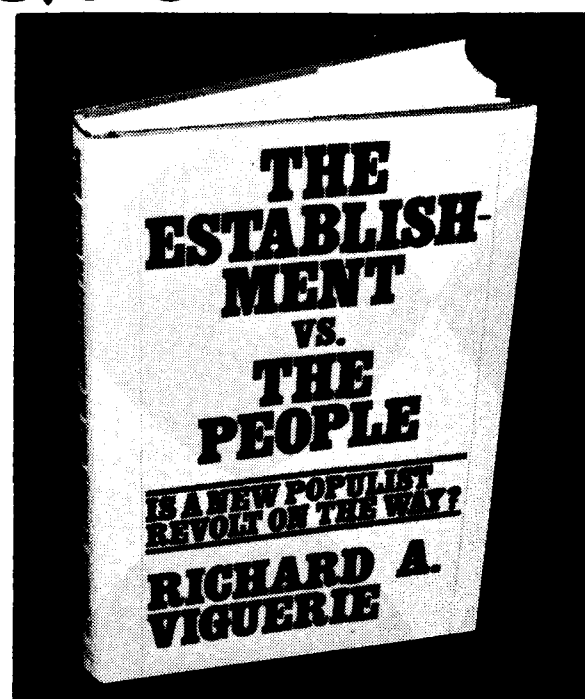
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AS1

THE CONTINUING CRISIS



•The first month of chill 1984 expires and the goody-goodies' most dire premonitions have come to pass. Big Brother is going to run for a second term. He said so on the evening of January 29 and he looked as fit as he did four years ago, which is more than can be said for Mr. Alexander Cockburn.

•That renowned moralist and gold-digger was suspended from the *Village Voice* when it transpired that he has been furtively suckling at a PLO-associated teat. Mr. Cockburn (pronounced Kō*burn), who is widely known for his suctorial conception of wealth and his equally suctorial relationships with wealthy women, was reclining in balmy Florida when the *Boston Phoenix* broke the story that way back in August 1982 Mr. Cockburn accepted a \$10,000 grant from something called the Institute of Arab Studies to write a monograph on the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Now over a year later Mr. Cockburn had neither come up with a monograph nor even informed his editor of who had helped him to pay for his new puce tie. Mr. Cockburn pleaded innocence and insisted that his actions were similar to accepting an advance from a publishing house or a grant from a foundation. Yet what publishing house or foundation has a military component, and how many military components are dedicated to eliminating an entire state by directing its soldiers almost exclusively against civilians? What has Alex been reading in sunny Florida? And there is more bad news: Who owns Alex's Lounge in historic Stoughton, Massachusetts? There Miss Chesty Morgan, she of the 73-inch bosom, whose tasteful act encouraged the patrons of Alex's Lounge to touch her immensities, has had to cut out the tactile stuff. A city ordinance has barred such practices, and when she went to court claiming her "constitutional right to be touched" a judicial holdover from the Dark Ages repulsed her, braying "Are you serious?" The unfortunately named Mr. Canaan Banana, president of Zimbabwe, is enforcing a law that makes ridicule of his name a crime punishable by five years

in the slammer and a \$1000 fine, which is a lot of bananas.

•Navy flier Robert O. Goodman, who is dignity itself, was released from a Syrian prison when the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who is indignity itself, flew to Damascus for assistance in his drive to become an American public nuisance of capital proportions. The periphrastic Rev. Jackson, whose moronic gibbering the colleagues in medialand extol as unsurpassingly eloquent (but then remember that they also find great merit in the utterances of eleven-year-old Miss Samantha Smith), returned from Damascus trumpeting President Hafez Assad's "humanitarian gesture" and flumdidling on about how his flight had demonstrated another of his learned political findings, namely "if leaders talk something will happen." Well, it is too bad the Rev. did not talk with President Assad about the condition of 25-year-old Mrs. Lilian Abadi, the pregnant Syrian Jew who about the time the Rev. was in Syria was murdered and mutilated in her home in Aleppo along with her six-year-old son and three-year-old daughter. All Syrian Jews live in conditions similar to those experienced by Lieutenant Goodman, as do the members of a dozen other groups on the outs with the humanitarian Mr. Assad. In southeast China a peasant who insisted that he was an emperor of the 13th-century Yuan dynasty was executed for swaggering around his province wearing an imperial robe and a crown. In some countries pretension can be perilous.

•There is another church and state imbroglio bubbling in Seattle, Washington where six Lummi Indians have been indicted for acts of piety committed during a solemn religious service. According to newspaper accounts, the Injuns, all male, are charged with beating and biting the sides of two teenage girls, one of whom has asserted in a mouth-watering testimony that "my sides felt like jelly." And in Indianapolis, Indiana the Catholic archbishop, a volupt 300-pound hippopotamus of a saint, still stands by a parish priest who is

withholding 50 percent of his taxes, the percentage of taxes that most dimwitted clerics believe goes to our defense budget. Apparently they think they are living in Albania. In Richmond, California all seem to agree that had burglary suspect Mr. Willie Dee Drumgoole survived a police choke hold in 1982 his life would have been worth \$1.2 million. That is the figure arrived at in an out-of-court settlement, and not only is it a handsome sum but no one has to share it with the deceased who could be very difficult even in the best of times.

•The Presidential Commission on Hunger concluded that "hunger does persist" in America but "allegations of rampant hunger simply cannot be documented." In Tangent, Oregon, Kitty Kat has inherited \$100,000 from his late owner, Mr. John Bass. Unemployment dropped to a surprising 8.1 percent in December. The economy grew at an annual rate of 4.5 percent in 1983's fourth quarter, and inflation for the year was merely 3.8 percent. Nonetheless the eight Democratic presidential candidates will not shut down. "For three years, they have opened their arms to those who are rich and male and white, turned their backs on those most in need of help, insulted women and minorities and made jokes about the handicapped," lamented Senator John Glenn in Iowa. On the same stage ex-Senator George McGovern hollered, "We aren't going to end the blight of racism until we end the blight of militarism," and of all the candidates he is in most need of the nomination. He is unemployed. The most alarming message of all, however, is carried by Senator Alan Cranston. According to his researches, "There are 70,000 more millionaires now than when Ronald Reagan became president." These are the dark days!

•Evidence suggesting that our military may still be frighteningly weak came when the Army announced that sexual assault is one of the risks of serving. The Army is refusing to pay damages to a female Army reservist who was raped and beaten by two fellow soldiers while being confined to

an unguarded two-story barracks for misbehavior. Yet there is finally good news for Mr. Milo Stephens, the 26-year-old incompetent who botched a suicide attempt in 1977 during which he launched himself into the path of a New York Transit Authority subway train. He has won a \$650,000 negligence settlement and is still free to try again. On January 12 Senator Paul E. Tsongas of Massachusetts announced his retirement, and Neoconservatism has reached Santa Cruz, California. There three high-school boys assaulted a "longhair" with a homemade bazooka as part of their campaign against "trolls," to wit: "longhairs, transient types, commies, welfare recipients, and people who migrate through town." The movement is even gaining adherents in our schools. In Williamsburg, Iowa, teacher Nancy Eggert smeared cow manure on the faces of students who failed to do their homework; though some parents protested. "I don't really care for this type of discipline," said the father of one foul-smelling illiterate. "I think it might be demeaning for a child to have this done to him." A very good point that—to say nothing of the cow's loss of privacy.

•The Phil Donahues of New Delhi are making their voices heard. An organization called the Delhi Eunuch Welfare Society has composed a letter beseeching the United Nations to help eunuchs around the world to attain human rights and receive "employment opportunities, free education, and old-age pensions." A three-time convicted felon has struck it rich in Holloway, Minnesota where one of his victims has agreed in an out-of-court settlement to pay him \$40,000. Finally the British paparazzi have agreed to desist from photographing the Royal family at play. Queen Elizabeth II became incensed early in the month when newspaper photographs showed her 6-year-old grandson Peter Phillips twirling a dead pheasant by the neck, a royal *divertissement* dating back to the time of old King Gustav Foolsfoot and reveled in by royalty and pheasants alike. —RET

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EDITORIALS



WORST BOOKS OF THE YEAR

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

As years go, 1983 is now a ghost, which means that it is again my privilege to announce the J. Gordon Coogler Awards given annually by *The American Spectator* in recognition of the year's worst books of fiction and nonfiction. Let it be stated before the celebrations begin that in 1983 there probably were worse books published than those we are about to honor. Yet the immortal J. Gordon Coogler in whose memory our awards are made was probably never the worst poet in America, not even at his most absurd. Rather he was the worst of the Republic's celebrated poets. He was in fact so bad that the Republic's wags celebrated him for just that, and he never caught on.

Our Coogler laureates are, then, the authors of celebrated books deemed by our distinguished panel of critics to be least worthy of celebration. These books are donkeys that have strayed in

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post column syndicated by King Features.



THE J. GORDON COOGLER AWARDS

Heartburn
by Nora Ephron

*The Price of Power:
Kissinger in the Nixon White House*
by Seymour M. Hersh

with the show horses, and if other judges have failed to note their pathetic condition here is but another manifestation of the hard times into which American letters have fallen since the great days of Coogler. This year *The American Spectator* is presenting its ninth annual J. Gordon Coogler Awards to Nora Ephron for her novel *Heartburn*,¹ and to Seymour M. Hersh for his scholarly study, *The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House*.² As the latter book has been widely adjudged a piece of fiction and as Ephron's novel is so obviously based on her own life, our laureates might want to exchange awards. Certainly there will be no objection from me. In these books both authors exhibit such a formidable capacity for rage that I am not about to raise their hackles.

Hersh might uncover evidence of my involvement in some nefarious plot against progress, say complicity in the doom of the sainted Salvador Allende, or he might expose one of my tragic flaws after sifting through the contents of my garbage cans. More horrible still, Ephron might renounce her vow against trans-New York males and mark me down as her next target for marriage. Neither of these fierce

guardians of truth is to be trifled with.

Ephron's very bad book was inspired by the infidelities of her second husband. Hersh's was inspired by infidelities committed by Henry Kissinger when he was in cahoots with Richard Milhous Nixon of baleful memory. Both writers are moralists in the modern manner, which is to say they exhibit no set of principles or virtues that any moral philosopher ever heard of would describe as a moral system. Nonetheless they are avid to condemn their victims for being so shockingly naughty and worthy of contempt. Why they get so hot under the collar I have no idea. Possibly they see anger as the path to what the philosophers call the good life.

Hersh accuses Kissinger of most of the very same low deeds that he himself commits. In the opinion of Richard Grenier, the novelist and sage who championed Hersh for this award, Hersh is bullying, unscrupulous, vindictive, self-serving, and hypocritical. What is worse, he is a composer of tedious prose. Grenier estimates that he should have charged \$200 per hour just for reading the book. Hersh's idea of a reliable source on the Paris negotiations ending the war in Vietnam is the good government crowd in Hanoi, where he went in August 1979 and reported "there is no gap in Vietnam between the life of the people and

the life of the officials." Hersh's idea of reliable sources on Kissinger are those who have gone on record as loathing him, though often even these sources rebel, as did former U.S. Ambassador to Chile Edward Korry, who calls Hersh "a consistent liar" and more.

Ephron's artistry is different. She is a celebrity who dips into the heroic moments of her life and merchandises them for all her fans. In days of yore some people sold their bodies and were scorned. Today our celebrities sell their names, their misadventures, anything that will enrich them; and they grow more celebrated. Ephron sets out to portray her second husband as a jackass, and it is suggestive of her prodigious tastelessness that though she succeeds she makes herself look worse. Once again George Nathan's maxim is vindicated: "Whom the gods would destroy they first make famous."

What is it that both these books lack? In fine and in sum it is dignity, which, I suppose, explains why they were so celebrated to begin with. □



¹ Alfred A. Knopf, \$11.95.
² Summit Books, \$19.95.

DOPED

A decade or so ago all the progressive cognoscenti were in the ardors for idealizing various drugs: marijuana for the small fry, LSD and the like for the Big Leaguers. I personally recall a distinguished professor—so distinguished in fact that *Playboy* magazine quoted him regularly—who pontificated to his students on the benign qualities of LSD. One of the cant terms used to sanitize the drug issue was "victimless crime." The ardors have now been spent. Yet, as with so many crucial matters about which Americans should be in accord and resolute, we remain ambivalent about eliminating drugs.

Nancy Reagan and other worthies campaign against drugs. Therapy centers are established to rehabilitate the basket cases. Nonetheless drugs are used widely and with a certain social cachet. As a nation we are not serious about drugs. The drug laws are er-

atically enforced, and some are not very stringent. In fine, as with so many other progressive enthusiasms that came out of the 1960s, though we have learned from experience the progressives are still around to prevent us from acting upon our bitter knowledge. The victims of the so-called victimless crimes pile up, but our attempts to eliminate the drug culture are rendered futile by the same people who liberalized our views on drugs years ago.

In late December one of the most gifted men I have ever known died tragically and mysteriously in California. Through much of his youth he had been one of America's great athletes. Ultimately he became the greatest springboard diver in the world. Today his family is baffled and grieving. He and they are just so many more victims of the last decade's victimless crimes.

Cocaine had been one of the small

congeries of calamities associated with his name toward the end of his life. At the beginning, charm was one of his calamities. From the perspective of middle age I now look back and recognize that he was from the start elevated above his peers by extraordinary charm. What is more, he could orchestrate brilliant moments of hilarity, for his sense of humor, too, was uncommon. I doubt that the charm and humor were there in the end.

Recalling the widespread drug addiction that he witnessed at the Egyptian University in the late 1920s, the illustrious English journalist Malcolm Muggeridge writes in his memoirs of "the stupefied faces and inert minds." His description comports with the dozing lumps of blissful stupidity so clearly observable among today's habitués of cocaine and all the other less celebrated drugs. I hope my friend never lost his charm and his laughter, but I know better.

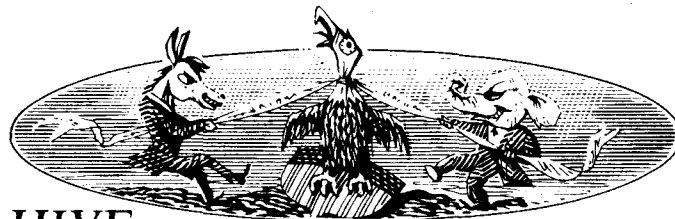
In the end he had lost practically everything but the fidelity of his family. Precocity and intelligence had been with him from grade school through college and his early days in business. In everything he was a success, and he was rarely frivolous, for under his charm and All-American good looks there was grit. I never saw him blow any challenge. Certainly not the Olympics, though he was the youngest boy ever to win his event.

When his friends and relatives paid their last respects they kept repeating "He had everything." It was not a judgment but a question. All were left pondering how and why so gorgeous a life could end so tragically. Why my old friend turned to cocaine I cannot say with certitude. Some consider it glamorous, and some resort to it when the spirit seems to flag. For all it is a sweet escape.

Yet you have to be somewhat of a fool not to notice that it is also a cer-

(continued on page 44)

C A P I T O L I D E A S



SMITHWICK AND THE HIVE

by Tom Bethell

Ed Meese is once again in the news, having been nominated to replace William French Smith as attorney general. This is still only Day Two, as I write, but one senses a hostile media swarm shaping up in the coming weeks. As a *Washington Post* editorial candidly warned on Day One, "Nothing about this transfer is likely to be tranquil. Fasten your seat belts." Ed Meese, don your beekeeper's mask. The Justice Department has been and has largely remained under Mr. Smith's tenure a strategic cell of the Hive, and the bees certainly don't want it to be occupied by someone who "sends the wrong signals." So they will attack, unless I am much mistaken.

On Day One I read, also in the *Washington Post*, that Smith "has been praised by many in the administration and in Congress for his stewardship of day-to-day operations." That was Mary Thornton's way of telling us that Smith, his cronyship notwithstanding, had been considered Hive-harmless.

Tom Bethell is The American Spectator's Washington correspondent.

I'm sure that William French Smith is an awfully nice man, but he is unfortunately the kind of fellow who tends to undermine interest in the Republican party among the educated classes: the country club lawyer who earns a ton of money, spends an inexplorable amount of time on the golf courses of Palm Springs, and thinks of Washington as a place where you have an opportunity to drive about in a chauffeur-driven limousine if you have the right White House connections—this being thought of in the corporate

community as the American equivalent of a knighthood.

It has been one of Ronald Reagan's most serious weaknesses as President that he has appointed a number of such people to important jobs in his administration; as though he had no idea there is a war in progress—an ideological one. One also thinks, for example, of his appointment of Charles Wick to head the U.S. Information Agency. Reagan seemed to regard the filling of such important posts as nothing more than a chance

to reward some of his rich California friends. These people in turn understood that this meant they would have a deferential retinue and a limousine, and photographers from the society pages would take pictures of them as they set off for the theater in the evening; their wives might even make the "ten best-dressed" list. Of course the salary wasn't so hot, but they already had more than enough money, most of them.

Was there no political goal to be attained, in the mind of his Cronyship, Lord Smithwick, you may wonder? Why yes, an important one: the reelection of the President. This was the precise political equivalent of the "bottom line" of profit and loss that the chairman of the board would be worrying about in the corporate sector.

Okay, but were there no actual policy goals to aim for—government programs to be developed, changed, or abolished? If you don't mind, please, Rt. Hon. Smithwick is too busy for such details. At the moment, as it happens, he is on a golf cart in Palm Springs and when he gets back to



Washington he'll be in his limo, dictating very important memos. Besides, isn't there a bureaucracy, lawyers, civil servants and so on, White House staff, to take care of all that policy business?

So you can see why the *Washington Post* newsroom, or some other such hornet's nest, consisting of people who grumble in a purely *pro forma* way about Reagan's kitchen cabinet and his millionaire friends, in fact have little

quarrel with such pliant, malleable appointees—people who will essentially take orders from their subordinates, and from the next day's newspaper headlines, as long as they can be persuaded that such a course of action will help re-elect the President. And in fact, there was no assault on William French Smith in the course of his three-year tenure—a sure sign that he was doing little to implement what should

have been a conservative agenda.

Ed Meese, on the other hand, does not really fit this description. He is interested in law enforcement, and supports the notion more strongly than is currently fashionable within the progressive consensus. He was called "something of a police buff" by the *New York Times*, and of course he

called the American Civil Liberties Union a "criminal's lobby," which marked him off as a Public Enemy the minute he said it. The Hive instinctively knows that it has to attack him. (Remember: The Hive acts *instinctively*, in response to signals publicly transmitted in print or across the airwaves. It does not respond to orders, or instructions. Bees act in a concerted way, but they are not conspirators.)

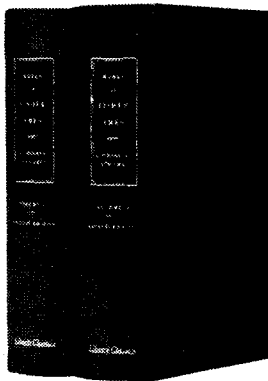
By the way, there's an interesting paradox here. The Naderite reformers of the 1970s pushed through so many financial-disclosure, blind-trust, and "conflict-of-interest" requirements that they made government employment less attractive for the very senior-citizen corporate types who are the most easily bullied into submission once they arrive in Washington. As a result, more and more Republican slots are likely to be filled in the future by serious people with an agenda and a real understanding of the issues; academics, it is to be hoped—people like Donald Devine at the Office of Personnel Management and William Bennett at the National Endowment for the Humanities. As Bennett demonstrated with his recent principled attack on the reverse discrimination that is now called an "expansion" of civil rights, these people are a far more serious threat to the liberal apiary than emeritus millionaires from Southern California. The Naderites should have left well enough alone . . .

I called someone I know slightly at the Justice Department, a Reagan appointee. Anonymous quotations are annoying, I know—one can't help wondering how many of them in the media are made up—but this fellow does like his job and he wants to keep it. He said of William French Smith: "He behaved like a senior partner of a large law firm rather than a reformer coming into a nest of vipers. There should have been more of an effort to change the personnel. In the Civil Rights Division there were maybe seven Reaganites, as against 150 lawyers who are 'career.' They came in during the Carter Administration, most of them, and . . ."

"Are you sure they can be fired?" I said.

"Read your Civil Service regulations," he replied. "There are three categories without Civil Service protection. Schedule C—political appointees; Schedule B—temporaries; and Schedule A—experts such as lawyers, doctors, and accountants. Most of the lawyers in the Civil Rights Division are Schedule A, and there are many more throughout the Justice Department. Some of them are legitimate experts. But many of them are advocates and fanatics."

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They advocate the "expanded" definition of civil rights according to which the government takes the side of some citizens against others, like a referee who joins up with one of the teams in the middle of the game.

My source continued: "There are plenty of young Republican lawyers in this town—some of them waiting on tables. We should be using our Schedule A hiring capacity to reward good Republicans; to credential them so that they can move up within future Administrations; and to train them in areas of law where we need people with expertise in law. Because basically you learn the law by experience, not from books. We also could use them to assist the political appointees. It is ridiculous when you have to sit here and do half the legal work yourself."

He further noted the striking difference between the average young Republican's résumé, and the young Democrat's. "With the young Republican, all too often you will find that he has been a small-town lawyer for ten years and that's it. The young Democrat will have had Washington experience," serving as a deputy counsel or an assistant to a commission or whatever.

It all gets back to the point I have made before, about Republicans not really believing that they have a legitimate role to play in Washington—thought of as a privileged enclave reserved for those who would continue in the FDR tradition and expand government's reach still further. Such diffident Republicans tend to think of themselves as little more than good citizens, dutifully adjusting to such changes as may be forthcoming from the powers that be, and perhaps keeping a self-protective eye out for various loopholes in the encircling net of government. Things cannot be changed structurally, however, because such Republicans (especially if they are businessmen) have already conceded the philosophical high ground to the Democrats, and are not really even aware that there are legitimate, rival arguments to make (even if they did feel like making them, which of course is not frequently the case).

It is Reagan's weakness that he has so regularly tried to govern according to the rules established by his adversaries. I thought of this the other day when he said: "We are taking care of more people than we've ever taken care of before." It is not the government's job to take care of people. That is the job of individuals, families, neighbors, churches, and voluntary organizations. Governments are meant to ensure that

all are treated alike, and that some citizens don't infringe upon the rights of others. By accepting socialism in principle Reagan invites his adversaries to claim that it is legitimate and to push for more of it.

That conservative, or better, non-socialist principles can be invoked and re-established in Washington was shown recently by the new Civil Rights Commission which, it appears, will at-

tempt to restore the idea that civil rights are specified *limitations* of government power, not opportunities for government to expand its power in the guise of expanding civil rights. Once again we have Mr. Meese to thank for playing an important role in the transformation of the Commission. Perhaps he will now have an opportunity to do something about the Civil Rights Division at Justice,

specifically the Schedule A appointees. They will of course squawk to the media at the first sign of change, and the media will give front-page amplification to these squawks (the adversary press in action), but if conservatives are not prepared to put up with a bit of flak from the increasingly left-wing, increasingly unpopular press, then they don't deserve to win a thing. □

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Edith Efron

THE BIG CANCER LIE

Deceiving the public and corrupting science.

The Apocalypics: Politics, Science, and the Big Cancer Lie by Edith Efron is the fully documented revelation of one of the most astonishing scientific scandals of our time: the ideological corruption of the field of cancer research in the United States. After an intensive study of the first decade of cancer prevention in this country, it is Efron's conclusion that the anti-reason, anti-science, and anti-technology trends in the New Left and counterculture movements of the 1960s—the "apocalypics"—have distorted research into environmental cancer and have saturated the U.S. with theories of cancer causation and cancer prevention that are pure myth. The book contains explosive information about scientific misrepresentation, manipulation of the press, and scandals on the highest levels of federal health agencies.

Since the 1960s, the central dogma of the apocalyptic scientists has been the prophecy that the modern industrial system will bring about the destruction of life on earth, and that one of the major forms of that destruction will be cancer. According to Efron, the principal methods of convincing Americans of the inevitable cancer apocalypse have been to ignore data and theory which contradict the prophecy, namely to ignore the existence of non-industrial carcinogens and non-industrial causes of cancer—and to generate baseless data and theory to support the prophecy.

In the sections below, which are excerpts from the Epilogue of her book, Efron investigates three of the mythic "axioms" of the cancer apocalypse—false or baseless ideas which, by the 1970s, had convinced the press, Congress, and millions of citizens that

cancer was a modern political disease that had emerged almost exclusively from the test tubes, assembly lines, and smoke stacks of American factories.

• • •

By the mid and late 1970s, the national press and some politicians were reporting unusually frightening news about environmental cancer—news said to be based on scientific discoveries made at the U.S. health agencies. For those who are too young to remember and for those who may have forgotten, here are some examples of the announcements which flooded the country:

- In 1975, the *Washington Post*, reporting on research being conducted at the National Cancer Institute, said that that agency was "producing mounting evidence that environmental impurities in man's habitat are the primary causes of most cancer."
- In 1975, Senator John Tunney opened a hearing on the Toxic Substances Control Act with the warn-

ing that U.S. cancer rates were rising at a fearful rate, and said: "It is clear from the National Cancer Institute studies that cancer is, indeed, a by-product of an industrialized society. Up to 90 percent are caused by contaminants placed in the environment by man."

- In 1975, *Time* magazine in an article called "The Disease of the Century" quoted an NCI scientist directly: "Says the NCI's Dr. Umberto Saffiotti: 'Cancer in the last quarter of the 20th century can be considered a social disease, a disease whose causation and control are rooted in the technology and economy of our society.'"

- In 1975, Dan Rather of CBS-TV News also reporting on discoveries made at the NCI said that "we are suffering a cancer epidemic in slow motion"; and one year later, Lesley Stahl of CBS reported that the American cancer rates were "soaring."

- In 1976, James Bishop, national energy and environmental correspondent of *Newsweek*, appeared as an expert interviewer on CBS's "Face the Nation" and declared to the vast mass

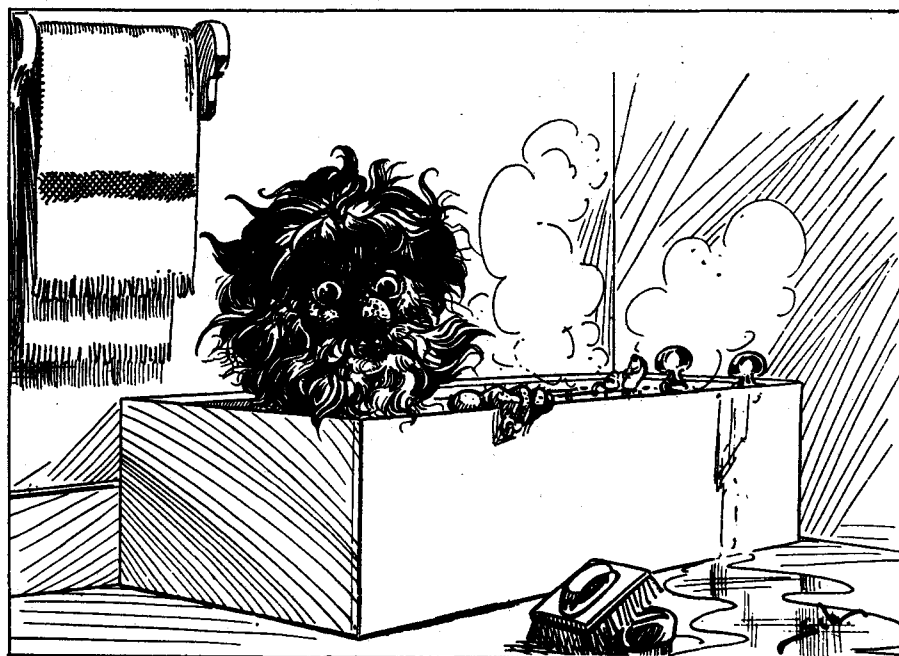
audience that "... it is now generally accepted that about 60 to 90 percent of all human cancer is caused by man-made toxic chemicals of various sorts."

- In 1977, journalist Larry Agran's *The Cancer Connection* was published by St. Martin's Press, in which he attributed the man-made "up to 90 percent" to the NCI, and wrote: "In truth, what we are witnessing is the unmistakable emergence of a national cancer epidemic. An epidemic of frightful proportions. A cancer pox. The numbers and the trends point clearly to the calamity that is already upon us."

- And as recently as 1980, the *New York Times* reported that a monstrous epidemic of occupational cancer was occurring, citing "the Federal Government's own estimates."

When one examines these various reports, one discovers three dominant ideas: 1) that most carcinogens are unnatural synthetic substances; 2) that as much as 90 percent of cancer is caused by industrial chemicals; and 3) that an epidemic of industrially caused cancer is raging in the United States, with factory workers as the primary victims. These three ideas were the fundamental "axioms" of the cancer apocalypics in the United States, and according to most of the above informants they had surged out of the National Cancer Institute and "the federal government."

Since these various ideas had presumably emerged from the study of cancer in human beings—from the science of epidemiology—I investigated the literature of that science to discover exactly what epidemiologists had reported on those subjects. As a former media critic, I was particularly interested in determining whether the press reports were accurate. Here are some of the discoveries I made about three of those "axioms."



© 1984 by Edith Efron. Adapted from *The Apocalypics: Politics, Science, and the Big Cancer Lie*, which will be published this year by Simon and Schuster.

The Garden of Eden/Post-World War II Theory of Environmental Cancer

The first and oldest "axiom" is the apocalyptic Garden of Eden theory of cancer which saturated the United States for two decades. I discuss that idea in great detail in a different section of my book which is devoted to carcinogens and animal tests, but I sum it up rapidly here. That "axiom" which emerged from the sciences of toxicology and carcinogenesis held that all cancers were caused by carcinogens; that nature was virtually free of carcinogens; that man is the only species which creates carcinogens; and that most carcinogens are artifacts produced in the test tubes of post-World War II organic chemists. This theory was taught by Wilhelm Hueper of the NCI to Rachel Carson, who taught it to Americans throughout the 1960s; and in a slightly different form, the same theory was taught in 1970 by an Ad Hoc Committee chaired by Umberto Saffiotti of the NCI to the U.S. Surgeon General and to Congress, with Barry Commoner devoting himself to the popularization of that theory throughout the 1970s.

Since, in all these cases, names were on the record, we may assume that the proponents of this theory were sincere. We may also assume, however, that they had not cared to read the literature of their field. Throughout the very decades in which Americans were being taught that carcinogens were unnatural substances, there was a rapidly growing body of experimental literature reporting on natural carcinogens—but that literature sat mutely in the medical libraries, unread or ignored by the scientists who were educating Americans. Indeed, the animal tests which had been conducted since the 1920s had refuted the Garden of Eden theory before American citizens had ever heard of it; and by the mid and late 1970s, it had been reported by laboratory testers that

every conceivable aspect of the planet Earth was teeming with natural carcinogens. The Garden of Eden/post-World War II theory of carcinogens, which had been presented for two decades as a scientific discovery to an advanced industrial nation, was, in fact, a religious-political fairy tale born of the ideological trends of the 1960s.

When one goes to the epidemiological literature, however, one learns that the theory was false for en-

breaking them down into high-incidence areas, medium-incidence areas, and low-incidence areas. Here are some of the examples he gave:

- *High* incidence of esophageal cancer was found in Japan, China, southern Africa, Jamaica, Iran, southern USSR, and the Caribbean area; *medium* incidence was found in France, Switzerland, Singapore, India, and Chile; *low* incidence was found in North America, "most European

From epidemiology, one learns why the cancer apocalypse, of necessity, arrived in America in the form of a fable.

tirely different reasons as well. Since the 1930s—three decades before the cancer apocalypse surged out of the NCI—it had been obvious to trained cancer epidemiologists that the Garden of Eden/post-World War II theory of environmental cancer was a myth.

Its mythological status is most simply illustrated by the very subject of a particular cancer conference in Israel held in 1968. It was a conference which never could have existed if the post-World War II synthetic theory were true. It had been dedicated to a detailed examination of the problem of cancer in the preindustrial world. After listening to a paper by John Higginson, a prominent cancer scientist, Isaac Berenblum, the basic scientist who had discovered anticarcinogenesis and cocarcinogenesis, and who was one of the fathers of the initiation-promotion theory, delivered a little talk. The enormous body of literature on human cancer in preindustrial nations, he said, had altered the prevailing understanding of the disease. Many of the "cherished beliefs" about cancer, he said, now required "drastic revision." Among those he named were "the old belief that cancer is predominantly a disease of economically advanced countries." Another was "the impression that environmental causes of human cancer are necessarily industrial in type." Those ideas which, according to Berenblum, required "drastic revision" were precisely the ideas that were coursing feverishly through the arteries of the American culture at that very time.

A striking series of discoveries about cancer in the preindustrial world had decisively damaged those "old beliefs." When Higginson, at that 1968 conference in Israel, sought to describe the global epidemiological discoveries that had been piling up since the late 1930s, he did so by means of a sampling of the data. He described the incidence of eleven types of cancer which appeared all over the world,

countries," and Israel.

- *High* incidence of stomach cancer was found in Japan, Chile, Iceland, Colombia, Finland, Newfoundland, and the USSR; *medium* incidence was found in "most European countries," Canada, and the Caribbean area; *low* incidence was found in Africa, the U.S., and India.

- *High* incidence of liver cancer (in males) was found in Mozambique and southern Africa; *medium* incidence was found in Japan, Singapore (Chinese), Nigeria, and Uganda; *low* incidence was found in North America, Europe, Jamaica, South America, and India.

- *High* incidence of cervix cancer (in females) was found in Colombia, Puerto Rico, Southern Africa, Jamaica, and among the nonwhite population of the U.S.; *medium* incidence was found in West and East Africa, Japan, Singapore (Chinese), India, and Europe; *low* incidence was found in the United Kingdom, in whites of the U.S., and in New Zealand, and in Israel it was "very rare."

That was the kind of information which had long since shattered the "cherished beliefs" that cancer was "predominantly" a disease of advanced industrialization and that cancers were "necessarily" industrial in type. Those cherished beliefs were, quite simply, false.

This was just a small selection of the data which had been collected by epidemiologists all over the globe; one can find these data in any good medical library. Among the most important compendia—the veritable bibles of international epidemiology—are several sets of studies. They include the seminal series of volumes entitled *Cancer Incidence in Five Continents*, edited by Richard Doll and associates; *Cancer Mortality for Selected Sites in 24 Countries*, edited by Mitsui Segi and associates;

and a group of international committee reports published by the World Health Organization. These compilations include not only incidence and mortality data, but an enormous amount of technical materials on the biological characteristics of the different types of cancers found all over the world. It was from this vast body of data collected over decades that Higginson had plucked his examples.

This was "environmental cancer," as discovered and defined by epidemiologists. It was a global concept derived from the varying rates of cancers all over the world, and the concept encompassed the least industrialized as well as the most industrialized nations on earth. Not only had the epidemiologists discovered that preindustrial peoples who lived in a "balanced" relationship with nature were dying of a variety of cancers, but they had discovered that in some cases their cancers occurred at far higher rates than did those of industrial peoples; what is more, they had discovered that there was great inconsistency among the industrial nations themselves. Higginson had also informed the audience at the 1968 conference that Singapore Chinese got about 20 times as much nasopharyngeal cancer as did people in "most countries"; that people in Mozambique had about 100 times as much liver cancer as did people in North America and Europe; that Canadians had about 10 times as much breast cancer as did Japanese; that Denmark and the United States had as much as 7 or 8 times as much rectum cancer as did Japanese and Colombians; and that the range of stomach cancer in high-incidence countries—Japan, Iceland, and Chile—varied from about 27 to 45 times as much as that in the low-incidence countries—Uganda, Mozambique, and the United States. Indeed, within the United States itself, one found some of the highest incidence rates in the world of



certain types of cancer (e.g., colon) and some of the lowest in the world (e.g., stomach and liver). By the 1960s, "environmental cancer," as discovered by the epidemiologists, was an unfathomably complex phenomenon.

One of the reasons for which it was unfathomably complex pertained to the scrupulous mental processes of the leading epidemiologists of the world, who had launched this quest for the understanding of human cancer. They did not begin with a ready-made causal theory; they began with the knowledge of their own ignorance. Accordingly, they had not selected data to conform to any prior beliefs; they had collected every bit of information they could find about human cancer rates and had excluded nothing. Their environmental theory did not exclude the industrial-chemical theory of cancer; all epidemiologists knew that some human cancer had indeed come from industrial chemicals, since it was epidemiologists who had made those discoveries in man. Their theory did not exclude the phenomenon of occupational cancer or drug-induced cancer or radiation-induced cancer, since it was epidemiologists who had made those discoveries in man. Nor did their theory exclude the fact that industrialized nations (e.g., America) tended in the aggregate to have much more cancer than did preindustrialized nations (e.g., Thailand), or that Americans rarely died of infectious diseases and tended to live until their seventies while (as late as 1974) the Thais were being decimated by infectious diseases and their median age was sixteen, approximately the life span of a cherished American house cat. They knew that cancer rates had risen precipitately in those nations where a variety of factors, including plumbing, an abundant food supply, and control of infectious diseases, had increased the human life span. They recorded the cancer rates of man who lived in jungles and of man who lived in

skyscrapers. They had ruled out nothing, and had collected all the information they could find about every type of cancer in every type of country, society, and region. And precisely because they had ruled out nothing, their resulting data conformed to no preexisting "cherished beliefs" about the nature of cancer and was chaotically complex.

There had been an important by-product of this scrupulous global search: The epidemiologists had destroyed the rational possibility of any kind of simple-minded reductionism in the analysis of the causes of human cancer. And they had destroyed that rational possibility *before* Wilhelm Hueper of the NCI and his intellectual heirs had told one of the most advanced industrial civilizations on earth their fairy tale. From epidemiology, one learns why the cancer apocalypse, of necessity, arrived in America in the form of a fable. It could not have emerged from fact. The epidemiologist fathers of the theory of environmental cancer had made the first "axiom" of the apocalypse a scientific impossibility.

90 Percent of Cancer Comes From Industrial Chemicals

The second "axiom" of the cancer apocalypse was the famous report attributed by journalists and politicians to anonymous sources at the "National Cancer Institute" in the middle and late 1970s that as much as 90 percent of cancer was "environmental"—and by "environmental" the anonymous informant(s) meant the "man-made" or *industrial* environment. We have no way of knowing who Anonymous is unless reporters decide to tell us. It is obvious, however, that some scientists at the NCI were espousing a similar concept. Hueper's doctrine certainly meant the same thing, and so did Saffiotti's 1976 statement in which he expressed the belief that cancer "largely" emerged

from "external agents" in our industrial system. It is less important to know the identity of "anonymous" at the NCI than to know that major NCI scientists were disseminating such views, and it tells us clearly that journalists did not misunderstand the meaning of what they were being told; they understood that meaning perfectly.

That 90 percent estimate, so cherished by the apocalyptics, did emerge from science—but it emerged from the

numbers of blacks to the Americas had created a natural experiment that could be used to examine the question of heredity versus environment as it pertained to cancer. He conducted a comparative study of primary liver cancer in the Bantu population of South Africa and in the blacks of the United States. He found that while the Bantu suffered from extraordinary high rates of that cancer, the American blacks did not. He concluded that liver cancer "was not of purely racial character"

The Garden of Eden/post-World War II theory of carcinogens was a religious-political fairy tale born of the ideological trends of the 1960s.

science of epidemiology. And it did *not* mean what "the NCI" said it meant. The full explanation of that 90 percent had also been in existence for many years. In fact, at that same 1968 cancer conference in Israel, John Higginson had reported the following conclusion about the United States:

While we do not know the etiological factors for many cancers, we are in a position to estimate on theoretical grounds the proportion of all cancers which may be of environmental origin. Calculations would indicate that in the United States approximately 80 percent of all malignant tumors are likely to be environmentally conditioned and thus theoretically preventable.

And in another much more extensive 1968 paper, Higginson estimated that 90 percent of all cancers were theoretically preventable.

Again, to understand the significance of that 90 percent, one must know how the calculations had been made. One must reach back in time to tell the story, for without prior knowledge of the varying global incidence rates it would be unintelligible. The epidemiologists had discovered that when they mapped the extraordinary variations in cancer rates all over the globe, they were looking at a phenomenon that resembled patches of epidemic disease. This raised an urgent question: Did these patches represent some hereditary tendency in certain groups of people to develop certain types of cancer, or were they regional outbreaks caused or influenced by external factors; i.e., were they "environmental"? The first serious attempt to answer the question had been made twenty-four years before Higginson's lecture in Israel—in 1944, by Sir Ernest Kennaway, one of Britain's most brilliant scientists. Kennaway, who in 1932 had been the first scientist to synthesize a pure chemical carcinogen in the laboratory, realized that the forcible transplantation of huge

and that the problem in African blacks "may be due to some extrinsic factor which should be studied." This was the seminal study that suggested for the first time that cancer in an entire population could be a function of geography, of place—of the environment.

The implications of this single study were staggering, and, clearly, the question required more extensive investigation. From 1953 to 1955, John Higginson, then in the Department of Pathology and Oncology at the University of Kansas Medical Center, working conjointly with A.G. Oettlé, conducted a far more complex study. They compared the rates of a whole range of cancers in the Bantu in Johannesburg with the rates of the same cancers in American blacks. The cancers examined were gastrointestinal, including the esophagus and the liver; genitourinary, including cancers of the testis, penis, uterus, and breast; soft-tissue cancers; leukemia; and children's cancers, such as retinoblastoma and nephroblastoma. Apart from cancer in children, where "the frequency is not significantly different from that observed in the United States," the rates of each one of this array of cancer types were strikingly different in the Bantu and the American blacks. In some cases, the Bantu had much more of a certain type of cancer than American blacks; in others, much less—and it was evident that cultural practices were relevant to some of the differences, e.g., circumcision, sexual and reproductive customs, and diet.

In the 1960 paper reporting on these extraordinary disparities, Higginson concluded that almost none of this large range of cancers were hereditary, that most were "environmental"—a concept which clearly and explicitly included the concepts of natural factors and cultural patterns. And in the con-



clusion of that paper, he wrote these words:

If a cancer incidence is calculated for a hypothetical population using the lowest rate available from the American or Bantu figures, it would appear probable that in Western communities at least two-thirds of all cancers (excluding skin) are environmental in origin and therefore hypothetically preventable.

Some years later, after Higginson had become a founding director of the International Agency for Research in Cancer (IARC), C.S. Muir of the Epidemiology Unit of the IARC and co-editor with Richard Doll of *Cancer Incidence in Five Continents* explained Higginson's reasoning to a scientific audience in New York. Higginson, said Muir, had compared the differences in the incidence of specific cancers as they were recorded in Vol. I of *Cancer Incidence in Five Continents* and had performed the following calculations:

Assuming [said Muir] that the smallest rate represented a level which should be considered as due to genetic factors, he [Higginson] postulated that the difference between this rate and the highest observed rate probably represented those cancers due to exogenous factors.

This is how Higginson arrived at his progressive estimates of 65, 80, and, finally, 90 percent.

Although a specific percentage was not universally accepted, the revolutionary idea that "most" cancers are environmental, thus theoretically preventable, had traveled swiftly throughout the world of cancer epidemiology. The 1950s and 1960s were a period of intense ferment and activity in that science generally, and Higginson's study had contributed greatly to the intellectual excitement. Between 1962 and 1969, Segi, Kurihara, and others had studied cancer mortality in forty-eight countries and fifteen Soviet Republics. By the early and mid-1960s, several World Health Organization committees had agreed that environmental factors accounted directly or indirectly for the majority of human cancers, and thus that the majority of cancers were theoretically preventable. And by the late 1960s, the first great integrative summaries and interpretations of the epidemiologists' findings were in print in the form of two books—one by Johannes Clemmesen of Denmark (1965) and one by Richard Doll of the United Kingdom (1967), both classic works in the study of environmental cancer.

Over the years, studies of migrants changing their cancer patterns from those of the mother country to those of the new country—Japanese who had moved to America; Indians who had moved to Fiji and Natal; Euro-

peans who had moved to North America, Australia, and to the tropics—repeatedly reinforced the discovery that cancer patterns in man shifted with geography and culture. Thus was the modern theory of environmental cancer actually born. It was a global theory that embraced natural carcinogens as well as industrial carcinogens, and it had arrived on the scene with an extraordinarily dramatic estimate of the proportion of human cancer believed to be "environmental"—namely, John Higginson's 90 percent.

It cannot be stressed too strongly that both the phenomenon of nature and the concept of culture—i.e., sexual and reproductive practices, dietary patterns, habits such as drinking, smoking, and sunbathing, etc.—were explicitly included in the broader term "environmental," not only by Higginson, but by all the seminal literature. The epidemiologists' theory of environmental cancer had been derived from studies of the preindustrial as well as the industrial nations, and that global theory had never equated "environmental" with "synthetic chemicals" or with "industrial chemicals," which is to say that the 90 percent had never been restricted to the "man-made." That, however, was the interpretation of the 90 percent transmitted to the American public.

Attempts were eventually made to correct this falsification of history. In 1978, when Elizabeth Miller delivered her presidential address to the American Association of Cancer Research, she took pains to explain the origin of the famous 90 percent and attributed it to John Higginson. In 1979, John Higginson himself granted interviews to *Science* and to the *Washington Post* in which he explained that his theory of environmental cancer had been misinterpreted by the "ecologists," the "chemical carcinogenesis people," and the "occupational people," and blunt-

ly described the erroneous beliefs about environmental cancer that were coursing through this society as "societal, political and quasi-scientific dogmas."

A few corrections, however, could not erase the "misinterpretation." The famous 90 percent had been lifted from John Higginson's work and had been grafted onto the post-World War II industrial theory of cancer, to produce a nakedly political doctrine. That political doctrine had saturated the entire country. This second apocalyptic "axiom" was disseminated by many sources; some scientists, as we know, have built their careers upon that "axiom." But by far the most significant source, because it was most trusted by the press, was "the NCI."

A Great Cancer Epidemic Is Arriving/Will Arrive

These two "axioms" bred yet another. Those who believed the post-World War II synthetic/industrial theory of environmental cancer also believed, necessarily, that the cancer rates would shortly explode. Given the latency period of cancer, which might be five to thirty years or more, the logic was impeccable. A great epidemic was actually an ideological necessity for the apocalyptics, for that alone could validate their beliefs. A sudden sharp rise in the cancer rates in the middle and late 1970s would prove that the post-World War II industrial theory was true.

Announcements of great cancer epidemics emerged from a great many sources of which the most influential, once again, was the federal government. Save for the steady rise in lung cancer, much if not most of which is due to tobacco, none of those epidemics has actually materialized. The story of one is told here in detail, however, because it caused an international scandal in the cancer world—a scandal which was kept secret from the American public.



In 1978, a great workers' epidemic was announced. It first appeared in the form of a mimeographed paper, a "draft summary" with a release date for the press, entitled "Estimates of the Fraction of Cancer Incidence in the United States Attributable to Occupational Factors." Its listed "authors" were the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences—which is to say that it had no authors. It named nine examples of occupational carcinogens—asbestos, arsenic, benzene, coal tar pitch and coke oven emissions, vinyl chloride, chromium, iron oxide, nickel, and petroleum distillates—and said that the projections suggested that occupational cancers caused by those nine carcinogens alone might be anywhere from 20 to 38 percent or more of the total cancer incidence "in forthcoming decades." The single most shocking extrapolation was that of asbestos deaths. Past exposure to asbestos, said this authorless document, "is expected to result in over 2 million premature cancer deaths in the next three decades" or "roughly 17 percent of the total cancer incidence experienced in that period." The asbestos death rates previously projected had been disastrous enough—approximately 2,000 lung cancer deaths were then being recorded among asbestos insulators, *most of whom had also been heavy smokers*. Never before had estimates of 2,000,000 asbestos deaths been made.

On the same day that this "draft summary" was released to the press, on September 11, 1978, Joseph Califano, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, funneled that 2,000,000 figure into the world of organized labor. Califano, a credulous political layman, electrified an AFL-CIO national conference on occupational safety and health with "alarming facts" taken from the authorless study. He informed the American labor movement that occupational hazards were "constantly growing" and linked them immediately to synthetic chemicals: "In the chemical industry alone, production has skyrocketed from 1 billion pounds of synthetic organic chemicals in 1940 to more than 300 billion pounds last year, many of them new and untested substances." He cited "a new study by scientists at the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences" which was scheduled to be delivered to OSHA later that week, and presented a selection of its data. One was an estimate that "5 million American men and women . . . breathe significant amounts of asbestos fibers each day." Another was the extrapolation that "17 percent of all cancer deaths in the

United States each year will be associated with previous exposure to asbestos." Thus did Califano start a flash fire that still burns bright in the American labor movement and in the labor movements of the world.

Four days later, on September 15, 1978, a more detailed version of the same paper, this time thirty-nine pages long with an eleven-page appendix, was released to the press and the scientific community. It was different in several respects from the "draft summary." The title had changed somewhat. It was now called "Estimates of the Fractions of Cancer in the United States Related to Occupational Factors"; the causal "attributable to" had been changed to "related to." The number of occupational carcinogens which were expected to produce as much as 38 percent of American cancer had abruptly shrunk; this time that awesome effect was not attributed to nine but to six carcinogens—*asbestos, arsenic, benzene, chromium, nickel oxides, and petroleum fractions*. And the period in which the occupational catastrophe was to take place had become extraordinarily vague; it would now occur in "the near term and the future"; the precise "three decades" was absent. The scientific institutions which were said to have prepared the study had suddenly proliferated; this time the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) had retroactively joined the NCI and the NIEHS as authors. Finally, within four days, the study had suddenly acquired a stellar list of "contributors." Their names were listed in "alphabetical order"—a point explicitly made on the first page of the paper itself. The "contributors," who included two heads of health agencies, were these:

Kenneth Bridford, NIOSH
Pierre Decoufle, NCI
Joseph F. Fraumeni, Jr., NCI
David G. Hoel, NIEHS
Robert N. Hoover, NCI
David P. Rall, NIEHS (Director)
Umberto Saffiotti, NCI
Marvin A. Schneiderman, NCI
Arthur C. Upton, NCI (Director)

There was also a "Contributor to the Appendix," Nicholas Day, NCI. The paper still had no responsible author, since, by scientific convention, the alphabetized list of names meant that no individual among them was taking responsibility for the data in the paper. Where these non-authors had come from, and why their names had not been on the "draft-summary" four days earlier, was not explained. The "draft summary" had simply metamorphosed into an imposing

study adorned with the names of some of the most important scientists in America's health agencies.

The study was strange in one other respect. It had never been published in a scientific journal or reviewed by other scientists. It had simply rolled off a government mimeograph machine right into the labor movement after being "publicized" by Califano—the word "publicized" used unself-consciously by the Chief of OSHA's Media News Service in letters written to inquiring citizens. It was altogether a most unusual way to inform America and the world that six occupational carcinogens were going to cause as much as 38 to 40 percent or more of the cancer in the United States—and unquestionably, according to this

The famous 90 percent had been lifted from John Higginson's work and had been grafted onto the post-World War II industrial theory of cancer, to produce a nakedly political document.

study, the percentage was far higher than 40 percent, since a list of other industrial carcinogens, which had not been included in the calculations, had been appended.

There was, finally, another striking aspect of this study. Not only did it predict the unheard-of number of 2,000,000 asbestos deaths, but it clashed violently with all prior estimates that had been made of the fraction of cancer that could be attributed to occupation. In fact, the challenge of those prior estimates was the stated intention of the paper. Throughout the preceding decade, that fraction had been consistently estimated to be small by some of the most famous cancer scientists in the world—e.g., Johannes Clemmesen of Denmark, Richard Doll of Britain, and John Higginson of the IARC, all of them fathers of the theory of environmental cancer. In addition, the occupational fraction of cancer had been described as small by L.M. Shabad in the USSR and by scientists in the NCI itself. In 1974, Levin, Devesa, Godwin, and Silverman of the NCI's Biometry Branch, then headed by Haenszel, yet another father of the theory of environmental cancer, had said of occupational cancer: "... only a small proportion of the population are directly exposed and these exposures can often be controlled or eliminated when the hazard is recognized." Commonly, the occupational proportion of the total cancer burden had been estimated at 1 to 5 percent and occasionally had risen to

10 or 15 percent. The new estimate of 40 percent or more made by the famous non-authors at three health agencies was staggeringly higher.

The 40-percent-or-more estimate also clashed with estimates commonly made of the proportion of cancer associated with other factors. Tobacco had been said to account for 30 to 40 percent of all cancers in males, by such scientists as Guy Newell of the NCI and Richard Doll in England. Tobacco, and tobacco-interacting-with-alcohol, had been said by such scientists as Robert Flamant of INSERM in France to account for 50 percent of male cancers. Nutritional factors had been said by such scientists as Ernst Wynder of the American Health Foundation and Paul Newberne of

MIT to account for 30 percent of all cancers in men and possibly more in women. In addition, sexual practices and reproductive habits had accounted for yet another proportion of the cancer rate, e.g., infection, possibly herpes, was hypothesized to be a risk factor for cervix cancer; low pregnancy rates have been correlated with high breast cancer rates; and diet possibly combined with inflammation was also said to be associated with prostate cancer. Clearly, if the new estimate that 40 percent or more of all cancer was linked to factory exposures was accepted, the other factors would have to shrink in significance. The implications of the NCI-NIEHS-NIOSH study—henceforth to be called the HEW study—were stunning to many epidemiologists.

In fact, the HEW study caused an explosion. The first protest—and perhaps the only one of which laymen were aware—was that of the American Industrial Health Council (AIHC), which released a thunderous critique of the study. One contributor, David Rall, head of the NIEHS, dismissed the critique with an ad hominem attack; it was, he said, "what might be expected of industry." But "industry" was not alone in its shock. Thomas Maugh of *Science* analyzed both the HEW study and the industrial critique and declared that "the AIHC report appears to demonstrate some rather serious errors in the HEW report." He explained the central "error":

In each case, the investigators have taken the highest risk ratio available—ratios obtained for workers exposed to massive concentrations of carcinogens—and multiplied that by the total number of workers who might have been exposed to the carcinogen, *even though most or all of the workers have never been exposed to the concentrations upon which the risk ratios are based.* ... [The] investigators have also rather sloppily equated deaths with incidence, even though the number of deaths resulting from a tumor is clearly only some fraction of the incidence, depending on the tumor. In short, the HEW projections are clearly exaggerated. [Emphasis added]

The analysis of the HEW study, said Maugh, "necessitates the conclusion that its predictions are invalid."

Within a few days of the appearance of the altered and embellished HEW study, academics, too, moved to protest it. Some of the most eminent epidemiologists in America, joined by molecular biologist John Cairns, descended on the NCI to query the "contributors." The meeting was held at the Sheraton International Conference Center in Reston, Virginia. Only one "contributor" was present—Umberto Saffiotti of the NCI, who was not an epidemiologist. He served both as a spokesman for the HEW study and as chairman of the meeting. A transcript was made of the ensuing discussion, and here are some of the scientists' criticisms—criticisms which were never transmitted to the public:

•Peter Greenwald, an epidemiologist in the New York State Health Department, observed politely that "there are no authors, there is a list of nine contributors in alphabetical order but there is not one that really takes the credit for it," and said he had hoped for an explanation of this phenomenon.

•Cuyler Hammond, who, with Irving Selikoff, had done the most definitive studies on asbestos insulators—the workers with the highest exposures—professed himself "slightly puzzled" as to how the projections of 2,000,000 asbestos deaths had been made. He observed that "the only guess I can make is that we're going to see an increase for a short time in the number of asbestos related deaths and then a decline." He observed that the study used "rather tricky arithmetic."

•Richard Peto of Oxford mocked the study's asbestos estimates. Observing that they were "possibly 1000" times higher than the 2,000 deaths indicated by the Hammond and Selikoff data, he said that the 4,000,000 men said to be employed in the asbestos industry were "all being treated as though they had been asbestos insulators for years. It's comical."

•John Berg observed that "the report reads as if we're going to suddenly see

this vast, drastic increase in the number of lung cancer deaths that are going to occur over the next 20 years" and that "there's no way to substantiate [it]."

The document, he said, was "open to severe criticisms."

• John Weisburger, disturbed by the exposure data, observed that "this document, if it ever sees the light of day, should be reassessed very critically and the numbers involved carefully inspected."

• Michael Shimkin, observing that the estimates are "a good deal higher than might be legitimately based on scientific knowledge we now have," said: "I am somewhat surprised [that] scientists at the national level would themselves allow such a document to come out and be public and appear in the newspapers before it had adequate time for peer review." He considered the public release of the unreviewed study "a tragic mistake."

Others spoke at this meeting, but these comments convey its tone. All scientists were critical, some were caustic, and some were depressed. The role played by Saffiotti as spokesman for the study was particularly revealing. At the opening of the meeting, he tried to defend the study. He was worried, he said, that the low estimates of occupational cancer were being made without sufficient data. He conceded that the study had not been published in a scientific journal, said it was a record prepared for the OSHA hearings, and assured the attending scientists that it was "the intention of the group of people who have worked toward this document to now go back to it and try and work on it further to prepare it for publication in the scientific literature." The future intention to prepare a scientific document was a concession that the document was not scientific, and was ignored. Throughout the barrage of criticism, Saffiotti was silent, but one comment, not previously quoted here, affected him strongly. John Cairns, at the time the head of the Mill Hill Laboratory in London, had been particularly contemptuous. He had said of the document that "there were several parts of it which seem to be manifestly silly" and that anyone who could perform calculations "could see how stupid it is." At the end of the meeting, Saffiotti indicated that he was offended by Cairns's expression "manifestly silly"; it was "a strong term," he said—and then he did his best, once again, to convert a disaster into a source of inspiration:

And this I emphasize again is just an early stage of this analysis and because of curious circumstances became much more of a public document than it was originally planned to be. I hope that this [meeting]

at least will stimulate those whose names are listed in this document and many others to try and face the issue with facts, with data . . .

Saffiotti did not explain what "curious circumstances" had led a document without authors, "facts," and "data" to be funneled through the mouth of the Secretary of HEW to the American labor unions and directly into the press without peer review.

Equally curiously, no one asked Saffiotti for an explanation of those "curious circumstances." In strictly scientific terms, the government study was murdered at this private meeting, but it was a singularly bloodless murder, for the critics were mute about the obvious political dimension of that study. According to the transcript, not one scientist even hinted that he was criticizing a political phenomenon, and not one expressed concern that the country had been aggressively misinformed or that the labor movement had been gratuitously terrorized. The only effect of the study which was deplored at the meeting was the possibility of harm to the scientific community itself. Speaking with statesmanlike sorrow, Norton Nelson of NYU said he was "deeply concerned" that "a statement which is going to fall apart and cannot be adequately supported" would "damage the enterprise which so many of us are concerned with." Others, too, shared this statesmanlike sorrow, but it extended neither to the political purposes of the study nor to the damaged polity.

News of the condemnation of the study sped like lightning from that closed conference throughout the scientific community. It generated a series of explosive rumors, and the rumors themselves shed considerable light on the mysterious mutism about the political nature of the document. The first rumor was never published, but it was widely repeated. One scien-

tist, the story went, had sought to remove his name from the study, but had been threatened by the head of one agency that if he did so, his career in cancer research would end. A far more dramatic variant of that rumor appeared in print. It was eventually reported that the study had been repudiated by "several," "seven," and "all" of its "contributors," a story which implied that there had been a revolt by scientific slaves against political masters. In fact, there was no genuine revolt at all; no scientist on the payroll of a federal agency publicly repudiated the study. The rumors, however, revealed that there was a widespread perception of the cancer prevention establishment as a political institution which used intellectual intimidation to achieve its goals. The political dimension of the study about which scientists had been abnormally mute when an NCI tape-recorder was running was the dominant content of the rumors.

Generally, the response of American epidemiologists to this astonishing study was secretive gossip. Those who criticized the document publicly were rare indeed. One who did so was Irving Kessler. At a toxicology conference, he expressed his conviction that information about occupational cancer would come only from serious epidemiological studies of human beings, not from analyses of old death certificates or from feeding rodents massive doses of chemicals. He warned that epidemiology would never become an important medical discipline "if it degenerates into mindless statistical manipulation." He was particularly scornful of the HEW study:

I'm very much concerned by the political implications of enunciating cancer risks based on speculation, with pitifully little empirical evidence.

At the same conference, Philippe Shubik, a prominent basic scientist, observed that the HEW study had been

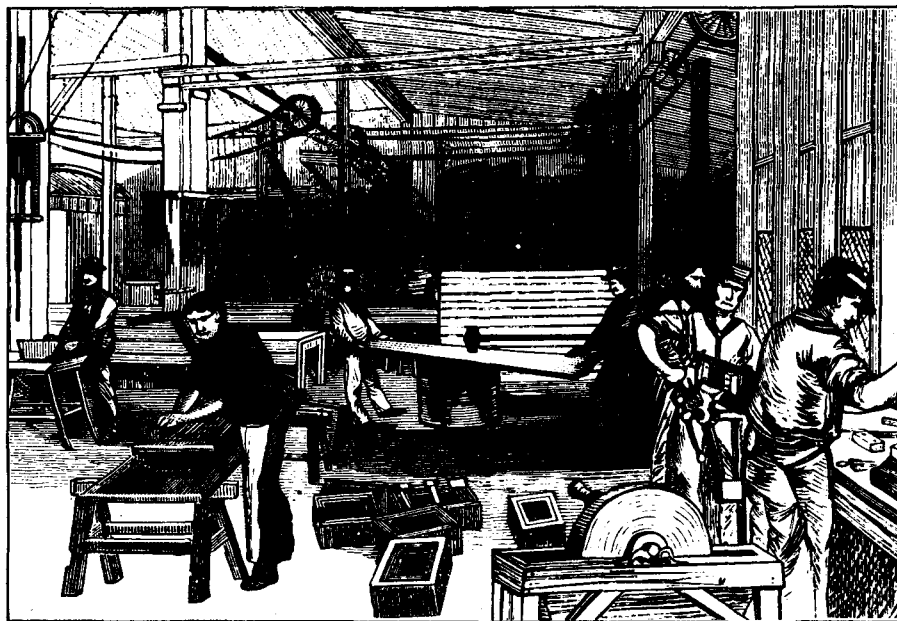
thoroughly discredited and informed the audience that several of the "contributors" had been invited to attend that meeting to explain their work but had failed to respond to the invitations. He did not name the "contributors."

Although the HEW study was enveloped in scandal from the moment of its appearance, the general public did not know it. That ignorance was exploited by certain advocates of the study. In October 1978, OSHA held a "seminar" for the press on occupational disease and repeated the data in the study. David Rall, who attended that seminar, also defended the study's estimates. Then another protest was heard. Four days after the official media brainwashing, Philip Abelson, the editor of *Science*, attacked the study in an editorial. Abelson denounced the "opportunists" and publicity seekers who were alleging the existence of a cancer epidemic caused by chemicals. He criticized the scientists from the NCI, NIEHS, and NIOSH who, he said, had given Califano the "alarmist" estimates of cancer deaths used in Califano's speech. He also informed the readers of *Science* that the NCI-NIEHS-NIOSH report had been widely condemned by epidemiologists, that Richard Doll of Oxford had called it "scientific nonsense," and that the British journal *Lancet* had deplored the appearance of so inadequate a study "under such distinguished names."

Significantly, Abelson mentioned only the names of a lay administrator and of foreign critics. The "opportunists" in the three health agencies were not identified. The "distinguished names," including those of the two agency heads, were still publicly protected, as were their American critics. But Abelson's column contained a warning signal: Epidemiologists abroad were also angry.

In September 1979, Professor Rene Truhaut of the University of Paris denounced the HEW study as a "scandale." Speaking at the International Conference on Chemical Toxicology in Munich, he supported the British Royal Society's estimate that only one percent of all cancers were of occupational origin.

In 1980, other more formal reactions from abroad were heard. Three were particularly noteworthy. The first was a paper in *Nature* headlined "Distorting the Epidemiology of Cancer," signed by Richard Peto of Oxford. An associate of Richard Doll who had attended the first private protest meeting at the NCI, Peto discussed the political as well as the scientific



aspects of the study. He criticized Califano's "absurd" 1978 speech to labor union leaders, and discussed the "curious but extremely influential document which has been circulated privately for the past year or more." He observed that it was prepared by "a working group of nine well known scientists, including Arthur Upton and David Rall," both of whom, he said, "still seem more ready to defend than repudiate it." The study, he said, showed how "a group of reasonable men can collectively generate an unreasonable report." And he challenged the fallacious estimates in

It was a remarkable case of killing the messenger who had brought the bad news, probably attributable to the fact that *Nature* is a publication that is also read by laymen. Senior scientists do not attack senior scientists where laymen can hear them.

The second response from abroad was austere and overtly nonpolitical—but given the source, it was a powerful counterattack. It was a paper called "Proportion of Cancer Due to Occupation," published in *Preventive Medicine*. It was written by one of the fathers of the theory of environmental cancer: John Higginson of the

cent. Speaking of the review committee, Higginson wrote that "the group" had concluded that there were no presently known data "which would seriously challenge" the estimate of 6 percent for occupational cancers. In other words, the founding director of the IARC and two of the most prominent cancer epidemiologists in Europe and Asia had informed David Rall of NIEHS and Arthur Upton of the NCI, as well as the NCI epidemiologists whose names had appeared on the authorless study, that its feverish extrapolations were baseless.

Finally, in 1981, the most detailed attack of all appeared in print. Written by Richard Doll of Oxford, yet another of the epidemiological fathers of environmental cancer, and Richard Peto of Oxford, it was an extraordinary review of the known data. Since it has been published in book form, the interested reader can consult it for technical details. In that study, written for the eyes of the world's scientists, the courtesy extended by Peto to American government scientists was abandoned. The HEW study was treated with withering scorn and language was used of a type that had never before been publicly directed at the U.S. health agencies. Because the study had been prepared for the OSHA hearings of 1978, and because OSHA was using its estimates, Doll and Peto deliberately called it "the OSHA paper." The estimates, they said, "were so grossly in error that no arguments based even loosely on them should be taken seriously." They repeated the basic charge that the risks for all workers, whatever their exposure and however long it had been, had been established by criteria derived from the relatively few who had been most heavily exposed for many years, and they said: "This disregard of both dose and duration of exposure is indefensible and produces risk estimates which are more than 10 times too large." Of one particular estimate pertaining to nickel exposure, they wrote: "This calculation however might fairly be described as a confidence trick." They finally declared:

It seems likely that whoever wrote the OSHA paper (it has a list of contributors, but no listed authors) did so for political rather than for scientific purposes, and it will undoubtedly continue in the future as in the past to be used for political purposes by those who wish to emphasize the importance of occupational factors, including the Toxic Substances Strategy Committee in their 1980 report to the U.S. President, as well as many newspaper articles and much scientific journalism. However, although its conclusions continue to be widely cited the crucial parts of the argument for these conclusions have, perhaps advisedly, never been published in a scientific journal nor in any of the regular series of government publications. Unless they are, with proper

attribution of responsible authorship, we would suggest that the OSHA paper should not be regarded as a serious contribution to scientific thought and should not be cited or used as if it were. Furthermore any suggestions which derive directly or indirectly from it that 20, 23, 38 or 40 percent of cancer deaths are, or will be, due to occupational factors should be dismissed.

In this analysis, prepared for the international world of cancer epidemiology, the U.S. health agencies had been charged with fabricating a politically motivated document and with using the devices of "confidence men"; and scientists all over the world had been warned that "the OSHA paper" should be treated as a contaminant of the scientific literature. Doll and Peto also declared that despite the overlaps and uncertainties, one could make certain estimates of the proportions of cancer that are attributable to various environmental factors. They estimated that 30 percent of U.S. cancer was associated with tobacco, 35 percent with nutritional factors, 3 percent with alcohol, 7 percent with reproductive and sexual behavior, 3 percent with "geophysical factors," i.e., UV radiation, and possibly 10 percent with infection. As for industrial factors in cancer, they estimated that roughly 1 percent might be attributable to food additives, 2 percent to pollution, around 1 percent to "industrial products," 1 percent to medicines and medical procedures—and 4 percent to occupation.

In sum, the epidemiological fathers of the environmental theory of cancer had stood by, explained, and justified their low estimates of occupational cancer, which had been the target of "the OSHA paper."

The principal defender of that "paper" has been David Rall. Two of Rall's criticisms of scientists who have made low estimates of occupational cancer are worth noting. Both are recorded in OSHA's policy document of 1980. Here is the first:

In the first place the estimates of the fractions of cancers caused by occupational factors are based only upon the *known* examples of occupational carcinogens . . . only a limited number of occupational exposures have ever been investigated for carcinogenic risk.

And here is the second:

Recognizing that carcinogenesis is a multi-phased process whose progression is influenced by a number of factors, it makes little sense to assert that "only" 1 to 5 percent of cancers are attributable to a single factor. It would be consistent with our present knowledge to assert that *all* cancers are associated in one way or another with occupational factors, just as they are prob-

Saffiotti did not explain what "curious circumstance" had led a document without authors, "facts," and "data" to be funneled through the mouth of the Secretary of HEW to the American labor unions and directly into the press without peer review.

some detail, again identifying the most commonly observed fallacy—that of applying the risk calculations derived from the highest exposures to people who had not experienced those exposures. The resultant estimates of occupational deaths, he said, were "utterly without foundation," although they were now being quoted repeatedly in the lay and scientific press. Those estimates, he reported, had now penetrated the international labor organization in Geneva and a labor organization in the United Kingdom. In the United Kingdom, he said, the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs (ASTMS) had released a document to its members which had appropriated the NCI-NIEHS-NIOSH figures and had converted them into British figures; that union was now asserting that "20 to 40 percent of current United Kingdom cancer deaths are caused by occupational carcinogens." According to Peto, the major causal factors in human cancer were tobacco and diet.

Although Peto invested considerable effort in portraying himself as a neutral in the political controversies over environmental cancer, he was clearly angry. For good measure, he attacked Samuel Epstein, whose book *The Politics of Cancer* was a popular transmission belt for the HEW's occupational epidemic and had become the bible of the English-speaking labor unions. There was a striking contrast between Peto's assault on Epstein—a private citizen whose work is read by choice—and his courtesy to the "reasonable" scientists at the head of U.S. agencies who, he said, had actually produced the data he was damning.

IARC. The names of a "review committee"—scientists who had reviewed and approved the published manuscript—appeared at the head of the article. The committee included some prominent American scientists: Lawrence Garfinkel of the ACS, David Schottenfield of the Epidemiology Department of Sloane Memorial Hospital, and John C. Bailar of the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*. But perhaps more important, that committee also included Johannes Clemmesen of Denmark's Institute for Cancer Epidemiology, the first historian of environmental cancer and possibly the most august father of the theory of environmental cancer; and it included Takeshi Hirayama of the Japanese National Cancer Center Research Institute, one of Japan's most prominent epidemiologists. In this paper, Higginson estimated the probable upper limit of occupational cancers, putting it at 6 percent; 88 percent, he estimated, was due to "other life style factors." He was quite aware, he said, of the problem of the promotion of one carcinogen by another and of the multifactorial nature of cancer, but rough estimates based on known data, he said, could be made. His estimates of the proportional significance of various environmental factors were based on data from the highly industrialized city of Birmingham in the United Kingdom: Tobacco, he said, might account for 30 percent of male cancers; tobacco/alcohol for 5 percent; sunlight for 10 percent; diet, sexual behavior, etc. for 30 percent; radiation for 1 percent; medical for 1 percent; congenital for 2 percent; and unknown for 15 per-

ably all associated with dietary factors, with genetic factors, and with hormonal factors.

What one learns from the first criticism is that Rall is unself-consciously critical of epidemiologists who "only" base their analyses on knowledge. One learns from the second criticism that Rall had actually ended up by denying the validity of "the OSHA paper" itself. His criticism cited above actually means that there is no way to differentiate analytically among any of the major determinants of human cancer. If this "holistic" description of cancer is true, then no scientific analysis of the causal factors of environmental cancer was possible or will ever be possible. To be consistent, Rall should have retitled "the OSHA paper": "Estimates of the Fraction of Cancer Which Is Due to an Interaction between Occupational, Dietary, Genetic and Hormonal Factors"—and put it in a shredder. He should then have walked to the nearest blackboard and written a hundred times: "People who live in glass houses should not throw stones." Those actions did not occur to the Director of NIEHS. He apparently did not realize he was criticizing himself.

It is common in a polarized controversy to assume that if one side takes a fallacy-ridden position, the other side is right. There is no such implication here. No layman can permit himself to form an opinion on the estimated fraction of cancer associated with any particular environmental factor. The layman can probably do no better than to consider a question Kessler raised in 1979. He asked: "What would be the value of knowing what percentage of cancers are due to unidentifiable unspecified factors?" The value is clearly political, and it is a value for both sides in this controversy. Epidemiologists, like animal and bacterial extrapolators, are deeply politicized; all are perfectly well aware of the practical implications of their

various estimates, and all are perfectly aware that what they are fighting over is the body of industrial civilization.

On the subject of occupational cancer, the difference between U.S. government scientists and their critics is that the U.S. government scientists, with little human data and with the aid of crude logical fallacies, extrapolated a catastrophic epidemic into the unknown; their critics stubbornly challenged those extrapolations into the unknown with estimates based on the few data that are known. Since, in fact, epidemiological studies of occupational cancer have barely begun, since the dietary theory of cancer is highly suggestive but unproved, and since no firm causal explanations have yet emerged for most of the major cancers in the United States, let alone for most of the minor cancers, one suspects that this entire battle could have been avoided if all of its participants had been willing to say: "I don't know." In fact, the only value of having percentage estimates of industrially linked cancers based on *confirmed* human carcinogens is that it serves as a brake on the unbridled fantasies of apocalyptic scientists. That may be the real reason for which nonapocalyptic epidemiologists persist in making such estimates. Certainly they have no predictive value.

An illuminating interpretation of the battle of percentages is on the record. At the end of a 1980 conference on cancer prevention, Guy Newell of the NCI made four interesting observations of which the layman should be aware. In the face of the "array of percentages," he counseled "caution" and said the following:

I have no problem measuring the excess cancers among cigarette smokers because it can be done—it can be done with quantitation. . . . I am very confident that the figure of 35 percent or so of all cancers in men is related to cigarette smoking. The danger is in the temptation to extrapolate this methodology to areas where I think it is impossible, based on current knowledge, to quantitate. The tendency is to extrapolate to the areas where the science is infinitely soft at this time. . . . This temptation to extrapolate into soft areas leads to the term Dr. Rothman used—an "illogical deduction"—and I think that this illogical deduction has been put forth by some in the area of occupation, and by virtually all in the area of diet.

Newell's second observation pertained to the fact that a given cancer might have more than one cause (e.g., both asbestos and tobacco cause lung cancer) and that causes could interact (as they do in the case of asbestos and tobacco). That, he said, made the use of percentages questionable. Third, he said, the use of percentages was being politicized and was creating "inflated

expectations" in Congress and the public. Finally, he noted that percentages tended to be equated with money, specifically with shares of the NCI budget.

Whether the sole purpose of the war of percentages has been to "create inflated expectations" and to reallocate the NCI research budget may be doubted. Too many foreign scientists participated in it and the ideological dimension of the war is too crude. But Newell's explanation of the invalidity of "extrapolating into soft areas" is informative—and it applies to both sides in the controversy.

The great occupational cancer epidemic, then, ended in an appalling international scandal, and in a shame, anger, and bitterness which is only expressed behind the scenes. This third "axiom" of the apocalypses—the monstrous epidemic that must infallibly follow from the assumption that 90 percent of cancer is caused by post-World War II organic chemistry—has not occurred. Lung cancer apart, there have been rises—but there have also been declines. We owe the almost universal belief that a great epidemic has already arrived to a few intensely political men in the government's health agencies.

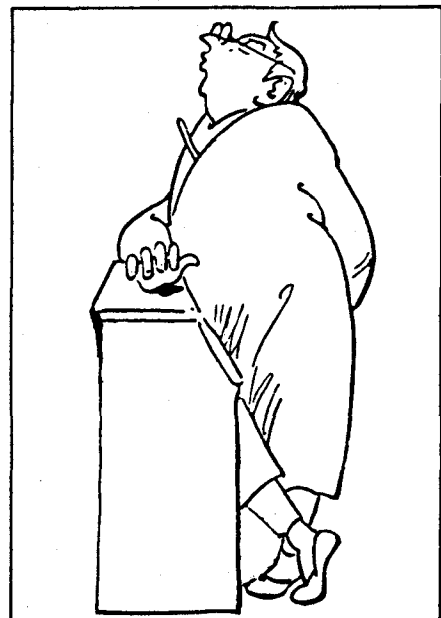
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One conclusion becomes evident from this examination of three of the "axioms" of the cancer apocalypse. All emerged from the U.S. cancer agencies and, always, bad or premature science was funneled directly into the press, as well as into the labor movement, before the scientific community—national and international—had a chance to exercise its normal process of challenge, confirmation, or refutation—a process that requires many years.

I originally investigated these mysterious "axioms" (and a great many other misrepresentations which are not discussed in this excerpt) in order to assess the responsibility of the press in transmitting them. By the time I had finished, I had reached the conclusion that to blame the press under the circumstances I discovered is absurd. The American press covers daily events, and does not see past the policymakers. It has been nourished on bad science since the inception of the cancer prevention program. It was trained, as one trains a circus dog, to view apocalypses in and out of government as fountainheads of scientific truth; it has shown a consummate credulity in the face of arbitrary edicts brandished by the policymakers as the voice of science; it has been taught by scientists to treat secretive or baseless assertions from scientific sources like

political scoops. No one has taught the press that science does not operate by assertions, by leaks, by off-the-record briefings, by mimeograph machines spitting out documents with release dates geared to the evening news, or by documents with no names at all. No one has taught the press that the very appearance of such phenomena means that what one is hearing is not science.

Undoubtedly, some journalists have been ideologically receptive to the apocalyptic "axioms"; some may have enjoyed the excitement of a new kind of war between Good and Evil; some have unquestionably seen themselves as righteous adjuncts of the regulatory process; and many, possibly most, have never known the meaning of the scientific words they were transmitting so excitedly to the public. But one cannot—I cannot—indict the lay press for failing to understand what it takes years to understand. To write my book, I had to read about 10,000 papers in carcinogenesis and genetics and about 500 books; and to write just the chapter from which these excerpts are taken, I had to read two histories of cancer epidemiology, several epidemiology textbooks, and some 5,000 additional papers in that field. Reporters must write swiftly; they cover the *daily* news. They could not take off several years to do their "homework." Indeed, as laymen, they have never realized how much "homework" there was to do. In the context of this book, it would be absurd to waste time criticizing the press. The inadequacy of the coverage is the inadequacy of the informants. Above all, it is the inadequacy of the thousands of cancer scientists who have been fully aware that this country has been fed politically corrupt science but have remained silent in the face of the cultural malpractice of their colleagues—perhaps out of self-interest, but unquestionably out of fear and helplessness. □



William McGurn

THE BEFUDDLEMENT OF AMERICAN CATHOLICISM

Oh, those medieval yearnings!

In the opening volume of his recent two-volume *Catholicism*, the Rev. Richard P. McBrien describes the present state of the Catholic Church as one of crisis. Though I should prefer the term confusion, and others would speak even more strongly, few are so blind as not to sense that *something* is wrong. Mass attendance is at an all-time low, as are vocations. Official Church teaching, where it is not misunderstood, is ignored. A generation of Catholics, many the products of 16 years of Catholic education and most far more affluent and privileged than their fathers, are today reaching adulthood ignorant of even the bare rudiments of their faith. The vaunted teaching unity of the bishops is mocked, as American bishops issue letter after letter at odds with those of their brothers in other countries, on issues from El Salvador to nuclear arms. On a local level, weary parishioners force themselves Sundays to Mass, where they are subjected to spectacles ranging from the sentimental to the sanctimonious.

In the United States, the confusion surrounding the Church moved into the front page when the bishops released their pastoral on nuclear arms last May. Even more than Pope Paul VI's birth-control encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, this recent pastoral letter polarized the American Catholic community: Not only is there substantial disagreement concerning the thrust and content of the letter, but a good many citizens—Catholic and non-Catholic alike—bitterly resent the bishops' foray into the area at all. Indeed, the primary enthusiasm for the bishops' pastoral has come from the clergy themselves, and the warm reception the bishops received from the media (who do not hesitate to excoriate them on such matters as abortion and

tuition credits) doubtless must be a pleasant change. The bishops consequently plan to preach next on the American economy, and after that—who knows? More important, who will care? In this his much-trumpeted era, the layman has found himself pushed aside by eager clerics plunging into the crassest and most moralistic politicking since the Temperance Movement. It is a clerical intrusion into almost all aspects of secular life.

No one seriously disputes the obligation of the clergy, especially bishops, to speak out on contemporary problems, which occasionally must have some political ramifications. But few religious today are content with "some," forgetting that the Catholic tradition is a rich one, embracing many different peoples and systems and not properly identified with any one (the word of course means universal). Though Catholics must accept much on faith (e.g., the divinity of Christ,

the Eucharist) most of daily living is open to various and often opposing interpretations by men of good will (e.g., what constitutes a just war). Moral reasoning—which, after all, has been around much longer than Christianity—is rarely clear-cut with regard to action, involving as it does striking that difficult balance between competing goods and unavoidable evils; otherwise there would be no dilemmas. During the Vietnam war, for instance, Michael Novak and William Buckley reached different conclusions about its justness, yet both conclusions derived from the same principles. This is what gives life its complexity, makes it difficult. It is therefore a long way from the Golden Rule to a moral mandate for national health insurance.

The proper and highly important role of the clergy, then, is to enunciate such principles clearly so that anyone—soldiers, bankers, housewives, clerks, and so on—can apply

them to the myriad difficulties that crop up daily, with all the attendant contingencies. Less than answers, what the laity need are guidelines, a special way of looking at and evaluating the world, a perspective on life. The layman's earthly domain is never as neat and precise as the moral theologian's textbook would have it.

Because politics by nature is supremely practical, it most closely resembles daily living in that the best one can hope for often is only a lesser evil. Most people (possibly because they have no choice) learn to accept this. They are used to the idea that any moral decision typically involves undesirable side effects that can only be borne. So the average parishioner with a wife and some far-from-angelic kids is virtually immune to utopian promises of peace and harmony on earth; he knows he cannot get it in his own home. A far more likely candidate is the pastor's earnest and idealistic young assistant, who may be seduced by how easily problems resolve themselves on paper and in sermons. Like the proverbial absent-minded professor, he is not the person one wants left watching the store.

Yet in the past two decades the American laity has found its role usurped by religious more dictatorial and self-righteous (and far less practical) than any rural nineteenth-century Irish pastor. The degree of clericalization here is unprecedented. Dissatisfied and unfulfilled, a goodly percentage of those priests, brothers, and sisters who did not outright abandon their vows flocked to the political arena, everything from running for congressional office to issuing policy statements on nearly every conceivable issue ("The Church has a particular responsibility to address the moral questions involved in the issue of strip-mining"). The difficult and frustrating job of keeping a grade school afloat or even listening to confessions can seem tame next to the glitter of life as a silk-



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stocking lobbyist for Network (a liberal nuns' group) or director of some diocesan Peace and Justice Commission. Predictably, this has been accompanied by the unfortunate emergence of a *Baltimore Catechism* of political faith, where everything is spelled out and the wheat is separated from the chaff. Though the prophets speak eloquently of a "hidden God," these religious seem to have no doubt where He would stand on rent control.

In practice the politics that the Catholic clergy and those most prominently associated with the Catholic tag have taken up is almost exclusively of the Left, increasingly the far Left. There is Father Drinan screeching to the *Nation* of the Reagan Administration's perfidy, using language William Jennings Bryan must have employed against the heathen. Colman McCarthy envisions a one holy Church led by brothers Berrigan and excommunicating insurance salesmen and FBI agents. The Hon. Edward Kennedy is a hero, epitomizing the New Age Catholicism where public posturing substitutes for private virtue. Then there is the charming Father McBrien, usually found on CBS explaining to the uninitiated either that the Pope does not mean what he just said or that he really does not understand what he just said. Michael Harrington, an agnostic who now calls himself a "cultural Catholic" (he wasn't always so scrupulous), no longer believes in God but retains that wonderfully childlike faith in federal soup kitchens. And the ubiquitous Father Hesburgh, celebrated for his independence by everyone from Ann Landers to Cardinal Bernardin, has a distressing history of basing his independence on yesterday's *New York Times* editorial. And all through the choir the chorus is the same: No salvation outside the Democratic party.

Despite the "progressive" label these activist religious are fond of applying to themselves, they in fact appear to be lusting for the sort of prestige and authority enjoyed by their predecessors back in the Middle Ages, administering great nations, arbitrating international disputes, crowning emperors. The guiding thinker behind the Catholic Worker movement, Peter Maurin, made no bones about the medievalist nature of his proposals. But against the old notion of reaching out to convert the world, our American churchmen today are intent only on prostrating themselves before the boot of Mammon—the least likely way of getting its respect. Professor James Hitchcock has noted that far from believing the Church has any real mission in the world, these church-

men believe themselves the world's missionaries to the Church. Apparently, they believe politics is the way to do this. Why tell people things they don't want to hear (but will listen to) when it is far less taxing to make lofty proclamations in favor of peace, justice, and mercy. There is much less personal risk. Last year in the *New Republic*, Patrick Glynn described how after Vatican II it was the political wing of the American Church that emerged the strongest. "The resulting structural incentives have operated powerfully on the bishops," Glynn noted, "since to speak of such matters as birth control and priestly celibacy has been to risk a torrent of abuse." Anyone doubting the validity of Glynn's statement has only to look at what happens to bishops who do not toe the media line, for media respect is a costly commodity. The built-up contempt the master has for his mouthpiece will spill forth whenever the latter attempts to assert himself.

Detroit Archbishop Szoka, for example, was depicted as a hidebound reactionary when he insisted that Sr. Agnes Mary Mansour keep her promise to oppose abortion, one of the preconditions for the archbishop's granting her permission to take the job as Michigan's director of social services. Explaining her refusal to obey Archbishop Szoka, Sr. Mansour stated, "I believe in a tradition of obedience more fully developed." How impossible to imagine a similar statement issuing from the lips of Mother Teresa—or, for that matter, from the lifelong radical Dorothy Day, who always maintained she would shut down the Catholic Worker were her bishop to request it. But in the "more fully developed" tradition of obedience, rendering unto Caesar means first and foremost getting on his payroll.

Confusion over roles is also magnified when religious take up jobs like Sr. Mansour's or Father Drinan's. Non-Catholics understandably have great difficulty separating the postures of individual Catholics (especially of priests, brothers, and nuns) from official Church teaching; Catholic laity sometimes have the same problem, albeit to a lesser degree. Yet the worst danger is to the religious themselves, the tendency to equate their own specific policy choice—practical interpretation of principle—with the only legitimate moral choice. In this way people who disagree come to be seen not as mistaken, but as evil, morally callous. Take for instance a sentence from the failed Trappist Colman McCarthy: "Officials of the Reagan Administration appeared determined not to see anything unfair, much less immoral, about the coexistence of

bulging warehouses and empty stomachs, nor anything shameful about a nation of food lines." The world is the less for it that Mr. McCarthy did not stick to his vow of silence.

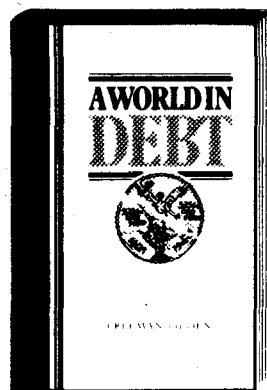
The reason for all this moralism is human nature: When people feel in sole possession of all the answers, dissent must be evil. How opposed this is to the Catholic heritage of 2,000 years, which emphasizes only the right questions. Yet how characteristic it is of current Catholic discourse in America, from Archbishop Quinn's suggestion that Catholics in the military refuse any order to detonate a nuclear warhead to McCarthy's virtually accusing Ronald Reagan of personally willing hunger in America. It also comes out in cases involving political apostates like Michael Novak, vilified as a sort of Yankee Antichrist not because of any doctrinal differences with the Church but because of his refusal to sing the praises of collectivism. The Rev. Andrew Greeley

summed it up when he called Novak a "turncoat." The controversy over Novak led author Robert Benne to make this point in the correspondence section of the liberal Catholic weekly, *Commonweal*: "I have found that when Christians of a conservative economic and political perspective disagree with me, they often say that I am naive, sentimental, or utopian. When Christians of the left disagree, I am often charged with immorality." Believing they have exclusive rights to moral interpretation, what the Catholic Left actually hold is an exclusive claim on a Fundamentalism that divides people into the sinners and the saved. The history of theocracies is not a pleasant one, no less so for what a theocracy does to those in charge.

As a group, the American nuns best personify the confusion in the Church, having succumbed in large number to

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the most bizarre male conspiracy theories of feminist ideology. During his visit to the United States, John Paul II was publicly rebuked by Sr. Theresa Kane (superior of Sr. Mansour's order), who thus achieved instant celebrity status. Others like Sr. Margaret Trexler speak of the Pope's obvious "psychological problems." "The reason men want us in a habit," Sr. Trexler told the *National Catholic Register*, "is so they can know we're their property. It does something for their macho."

Today these nuns (the ones remaining) together with their feminist allies are speaking openly of a "Women's Church." According to feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Reuther, "We are Woman Church, not in exile, but in exodus. We flee the thundering armies of Pharaoh. We are not waiting for a call to return to the land of slavery and to serve as altar girls in the temples of patriarchy."

Miss Reuther's fiery words were addressed to a conference called "Women Church Speaks," which included Catholics for a Free Choice (a pro-abortion group) and a caucus from the Conference for Catholic Lesbians, piqued because there was no specifically gay topic on the official

agenda. A Sandinista feminist named Magda Enriquez accused the U.S. of both attempting to "create world opinion" to "justify aggression" in Nicaragua and preventing "the Church in Latin America from seeing that the revolution and Christianity are the same thing." Many nuns sported "I'm Poped Out" buttons, and of course the air was thick with charges of sexism. The only thing missing was a surprise appearance by Maria Monk.

From the *Register* accounts it seemed remarkably similar to my own memories of a conference on women's preaching: the ritualistic denunciation of the apparently omnipresent male chauvinists; the neorevivalist fervor as woman after woman jumped up to share her own personal experience of sexism, all to nodding heads and silent "Amen's." Everyone, it turned out, was either *oppressed* or *repressed*, or both. One prays it is true that, as one nun said, "Many moderates take refuge in silence."

Nevertheless these nuns do show several recurring characteristics. For one thing, most of these nuns are middle-aged (possibly this is because our progressive orders are starving for vocations). For another, it is increasingly observed that those nuns who do make the front page or the evening

news present at best an unflattering spectacle: Not plain (which would lend them a sort of charm), an unhealthy percentage appear, as Tom Bethell has noted in these pages, downright dykish. The hatred of all things male spewing from their mouths does little to dissuade people from the unsavory conclusions I have heard even schoolchildren make.

What we really have here, I suspect, is no more than the ecclesiastical contingent of the bored middle-aged housewife, who at least had the grace to take up relatively harmless pursuits like bad poetry. But our nuns have crusader blood in their veins. They aim to stamp out iniquity no matter what the cost. Their claims on behalf of "the people" notwithstanding, the sobering truth is that God forbid the people ever did come to power most of these nuns would find themselves in jail. Had they ever bothered to ask, they would have found that the single most common complaint lay people have about their priests today is that the latter are not masculine *enough*; I am not sure that the majority of lay people wouldn't be in favor of a little male oppression. Ironically, too, criticism of an effete priesthood appears most popular among women laity.

But among the Fundamentalist contingent, for whom faith in the correctness of their political opinions is absolute and unquestioned, experience is rigorously excluded. It is not even considered admissible as evidence to point out the way something is. So when Archbishop Hunthausen of Seattle can "say with deep consciousness of these words that the [U.S. submarine] Trident base is the Auschwitz of Puget Sound," he is blissfully impervious to pleas that some important (and obvious) distinctions be made, not only between the nature of the Third Reich and the United States but also between the flesh-and-blood victims of Auschwitz and the alleged "victims" of the Trident. The essence here is that the Hunthausens cannot be argued with, because while they have all the answers they have no rational framework for reaching them.

Obviously, the problem with the Church is not that there are liberal, even radical, Catholics; the problem is when they equate the two words, and the deadly complacency and concomitant moralism it breeds. To prate of the "political implications of the Gospel" in terms of specific policy is sheer rubbish; such specifics as the Church does give almost always proscribe rather than prescribe, for example the condemnations of Nazism and Communism. As for the rest, it is up to people's own adaptation of principles according to conscience.

So when commentators on the Catholic Left accuse their nonradicalized coreligionists of having no more than a misty hankering for pomp and circumstance, Latin and incense, black habits and organ music, they completely miss the boat. Because really quite the opposite is true. For many of these people their greatest peace and consolation derives from the quiet dignity of the daily Mass, a small but invaluable refuge from the carnival-like atmosphere of the contemporary Sunday big-top. There, in humble side chapels of often appalling design, they are able to worship God without distraction from a thousand liturgical gimmicks, ranging from the insipid ("Happy Birthday Jesus" birthday cakes on Christmas), to the polemical (hellfire sermons against tuna factories in Peru), to the distasteful (obese liturgical dancers in tight pink leotards bounding up the aisle at the Offertory). What the tired sinners want is not answers but a touch of the transcendent, a glimpse of things hoped for but not expected to be seen.

This was the vision, after all, that guided the Church through almost two thousand years, a vision that could exert a powerful influence even on an agnostic like Mencken. "The Latin

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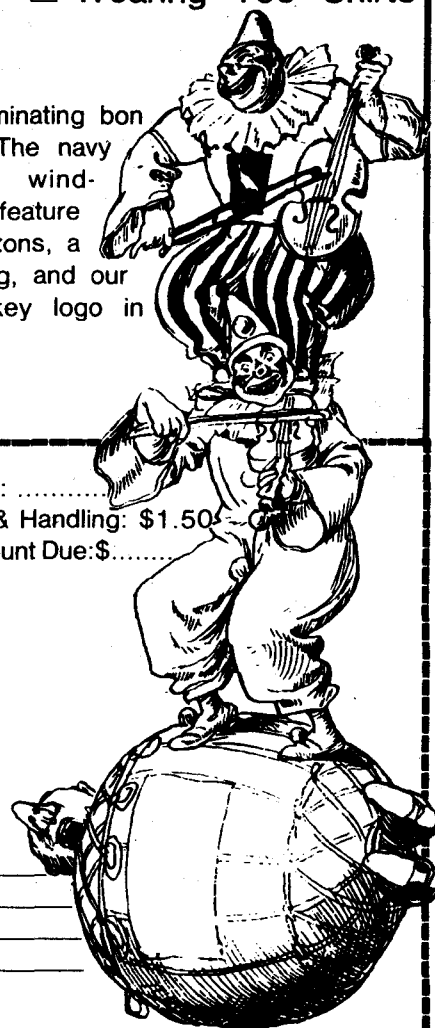
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Church," he once wrote, "which I constantly find myself admiring, despite its frequent astounding imbecilities, has always kept clearly before it the fact that religion is not a syllogism but a poem." Just as artists and writers can get so close to their work as to be blinded to its beauty, impervious to its symbols, so too can priests and nuns lose their perspective, taking the drama of life for granted. They need occasionally to step back from the immediate concern to take in the whole, much as the painter steps back from his canvas and the poet reads his words aloud.

Oils, vestments, candles, wine, water, bread—truly they are all preposterous things from which to fashion worship. In fact, a faith in a

Messiah born of a Virgin Jewess is preposterous as well. But the only thing more preposterous than faith in an unseen God is faith in a very visible man, who over his several millenia on this orb has amassed a pathetic record of cruelty, barbarism, and fanaticism in nearly every place at nearly every time. The ridiculous spectacle of a crotchety old pastor attempting to remove *The Catcher in the Rye* from his school's bookshelf pales when placed against the manifest folly of a bloodless Sidney Webb or the lugubrious intonations of a Carl Sagan.

For what is the Bible if not great literature, its people—Abraham, David, Joseph, Mary, Judas—all characters in a divine plot, fashioned in the image and likeness of their

Creator. Moses' flight from Egypt, the eloquence of the Song of Songs, the Christ born in a Bethlehem manger, Paul's exhortations to the Corinthians, each has in common with great art the sense of something timeless and transcendent yet taken from the things of the earth. In this same sense sacraments are nothing but holy metaphors, inspiring the imagination to understand where the pure intellect comes up short.

Moral dilemmas are not new. To claim that we face greater burdens than past citizens have faced is to skate on the edge of a special kind of hubris. Certainly the spectacle of a nuclear holocaust is frightening. But what must it have been like to hear with Augustine about the fall of Rome, and

all it stood for. Or to live through the Plague. Or to be around during the French Revolution when the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris was first sacked and then renamed the Temple of Reason?

What the American Catholic Church needs to recover most is its unique sense of the world, that of a sacramental Church whose legions are of sinners, a Church of the flesh, rooted in the earth the Lord created and found good but not of it. What it needs least is the sort of Fundamentalism that Mencken spent a lifetime attacking. The crisis of the Church today has nothing to do with politics and everything to do with poetry. At least in the United States, it is a confusion among the poets themselves. □

T. John Jamieson

CONSERVATIVE HOMES AND GARDENS

Survival in the modern age.

If conservatism is the total criticism of modern life, how is the conservative to live? How is he to preserve the integrity of his taste when the decadent, demotic twentieth century assaults it on every front? If corrupt taste is an inlet to moral and theological error, and one hopes to pass through things temporal without finally losing the things eternal, this is no trivial question. I mean to expound here the theory of the conservative hedge.

In that most intimate of interiors, the mind, the conservative carries with him everywhere certain antidotes to modern spiritual ataxia: Among these may be Plato, Bach, and the Book of Common Prayer (the real one). The first he possesses by virtue of a classical education; the second he recalls constantly because of a faculty for music and without an absurd electronic head-dress; the third defines his spiritual life, from moment to moment, in defiance of an apostate priesthood.

The next line of defense is his circle

of acquaintances, which will necessarily be small, consisting mostly of men who acquired their ideas in a better age and who are therefore mostly over seventy. His disgust with modern manners will cause him to avoid the public in general, and to stay out of places where he is likely to be spoken to by strangers; his archaic dignity would

cause astonishment, and then he would suffer the mortification of having people mention it to him. He will therefore stay close to club and home. A conservative's house is indeed his castle: A Czarist friend of mine points to his threshold and says, "Democracy stops here."

I propose, therefore, to discuss,

quite literally, the planting of hedges and the cultivation of the conservative *décor*. More than just the shrine of the *lares et penates*, and center of ancestral pieties, the Conservative House is the last stronghold of sacred order.

The best defense of the principle of private property is owning some; one way to acquire roots is to plant trees. The conservative must own at least enough property to place a hedge, wall, or wrought-iron fence between his house and the infidels. He may live in the country; it is a pleasant enough place to await the end of the world. But, on the other hand, the amenities of civilization are not to be conceded to the barbarian: The bookseller, the tailor, and the club are in the city, and so the conservative must sometimes be found there.

How is he to acquire the proper house, since taxes will probably prevent him from inheriting it? He may build it. John Barrington Bayley designed an eighteenth-century *chinoiserie* pavilion in 1968 for Dr. Dinsha of Fairfield, New York; the



T. John Jamieson, a frequent contributor to these pages, is landless but secluded in Evanston, Illinois.

prototype was an out-building at Tsarskoe Selo. It is also possible to build a new house out of old materials rescued from the march of urban regress: Such is Dr. Russell Kirk's neo-Victorian Italianate villa, "Piety Hill"—which Dr. Kirk is endeavoring to bury in lilacs. Mr. Donald M.D. Thurber of Grosse Pointe, Michigan,

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salvaged doors, windows, fireplaces, wainscoting, and a two-story Corinthian portico from a circa 1850 Detroit mansion that was once in the family; in 1970 he incorporated these into a much smaller house of exquisite detail, which also possesses a working gasolier and solid walnut flooring made from the frame of an old barn.

Yet *la manie de bâtir* may quickly lead to the loss of a very important conservative hedge—financial independence. The aristocratic (or aristocratizing) conservative must acknowledge the patrician aspirations evident in many pre-1930 *grand bourgeois* city houses. The best of these reproduce historic styles and possess butler's pantries, dressing rooms, powder rooms, and dining rooms with doors—instead of "living spaces." A recent "house walk" given by the Evanston Historical Society revealed that many of these venerable old dwellings are begging for deliverance from their New Class owners who read *Architectural Digest* and grow ferns where they would only put something obnoxious and illuminate it with "track lighting"; they cannot afford these necessary improvements, however, because of frequent trips to warm climates in pursuit of the illusion of the Noble Savage. This is to say nothing of the peculiar desecrations perpetrated by the *nouvelles fagues* strangely attracted to such urban villas. If the conservative can find a formal house to rescue from the formless existence of the modern *bourgeois*—in a neighborhood of stable identity (i.e., that hasn't been invaded by the collectors of "depression glass")—then he will restore to the front door its ceremony, and he will put the plants in the yard where they belong.

Interior decoration is too full of ideological content to be dismissed as a frivolous subject. Tom Wolfe has brought to our attention the radical utopian component of modern architecture: Moldings (especially "crown moldings"), architectural orders, pediments, overdoors, and even overhanging table tops were all to be abolished because they symbolized hierarchy. (The Society For Putting One Thing On Top Of Another was a reactionary cabal because it subscribed to the grand and awful principle of subordination.) Modern furniture's simplicity descends from the puritanical ethic of Marxism; its rectilinear form is designed for the mechanical man who will live by the rectitude of the dictatorship of the proletariat. "Ornament is crime" for the same reason that property is theft. Burke warned us: "All the decent

drapery of life is to be rudely torn off." We are to be left only with those funny little Venetian blinds or else with no privacy at all.

The Age of Romanticism, the nineteenth century, having discovered the psychological significance of *décor*, became obsessed with interiors and employed them not only to evoke moods but to erect poses. The trend culminated in the houses of the dandy-poet Gabriele d'Annunzio, a past master of the science of putting things on top of other things. In his last years, pensioned by Mussolini and ennobled by King Victor Emmanuel, the Prince of Montenevoso retired to a villa on Lago di Garda which he named "Il Vittoriale" and expanded and embellished and girded with walls until it became the Vatican City of *décadence*; a reflection of it and its owner may be seen in the fortified compound of Dr. Zücker, the last virile man in Fellini's *City of Women*. The Vittoriale bizarrely combined ecclesiastical *bric-à-brac* with military hardware to represent d'Annunzio's conflicting poses as Monk of St. Francis and Hero of Fiume. As the late Mario Praz said in *The Romantic Agony* (1933), "the friend of the Muses ends as custodian of a Museum." Praz himself, who had the Evil Eye, lived in a flat in Rome's Palazzo Ricci which he filled to the rafters, albeit in very precious arrangements, with Empire antiques, a collection of wax portraits, and furniture serendipitously connected with the literary figures he had studied all his life. His memoir, *The House of Life* (1964), takes the form of a guided tour of his flat: Autobiographical anecdotes hang upon the associations conjured up by his possessions.

Though they succeeded in contriving outposts of antimodernism for themselves, I would hesitate to call the Nietzschean inventor of the trappings of Fascism and the aesthete who studied him models for the American conservative. His requirements will be much simpler; he desires only to live as his ancestors did, probably with their furniture, as Russell Kirk, who possesses the Empire table levitated by his spiritualist forebears. The conservative's taste may display a tendency towards utopian nostalgia; I will excuse the Hamiltonian who fills his house with Federal(ist) period antiques in view of the symbolic value of the gesture. But the greatest of all artistic periods was the Baroque, whose aesthetics fused the Sublime with the Beautiful. The rarity and impracticality of Italian pieces and the plenitude of fine Louis XV reproductions from the otherwise lamentable reigns of Louis Philippe and Napoleon III will cause the Baroque interior to be more

legitimist than ultramontane—but no matter, just as long as American conservatism begins to acquire a cosmopolitan accent it badly needs.

It is such a delicious act of blasphemy against the "ornament is crime" school to own *meubles* covered with tapestry, marquetry, ormolu, bouille, and (by all means!) gilded gesso. It is also a tribute to the lost age of craftsmanship, incomprehensible to academic bohemian snobs whose idea of craftsmanship is embodied in a Swedish automobile or a French cheese. Ah, to spite the anti-historicist by owning reproductions which are themselves antiques! Or brand-new ones so well executed that they fool the dealers and might better be classed as forgeries, produced by a factory outside Paris which uses original designs and techniques and hand-drills the worm-holes and ages the varnish by burying the articles in mud for a month.

William Beckford (1759-1844), builder of the gargantuan Fonthill Abbey, called Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill "a miserable child's box—a species of gothic mousetrap—a reflection of Walpole's littleness." It is the rococo mousetrap of the ethnic *nouveau riche* grandmother, those little rooms filled with tiny sofas, "kidney" tables, curio cabinets, and worse, the curios!—it is gold paint that gave gold leaf (and the *szlachta*) a bad name. The difference between the Baroque and the rococo is the difference between the architectonic and the merely decorative. The curves of a good Louis XV console sweep with the force of a Bach arpeggio; its subtle *rocaille* culminates in the paroxysmic swirl of the cartouche surmounting the stretchers; it is of the proper size for a traditionalist priest to celebrate a house mass thereon "in total comfort." A long, lithe, shapely *bureau plat* dripping with ormolu evokes the grace of the antediluvian society that invented it and is the perfect place to read the 1792 quarto of Burke and write proper letters with a proper pen. But the monumental *bureau du roi*, which resembles an organ console and is almost more bronze than wood, must be reserved for studying DE MAISTRE and giving dictation.

The best manual for managing the formal house is the first edition of Emily Post's *Etiquette* (1922), which explains to the dispossessed how they may survive with only three servants; the best manual for decorating it is Edith Wharton's *The Decoration of Houses* (1897), which explained to the Gilded Age why it had gilded badly—a thoroughly anti-Victorian, anti-*bourgeois* piece of reactionary

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aestheticism. Mrs. Wharton insisted that civilized people could only live by the light of wax tapers; electric light "makes the *salon* look like a railway station, the dining room like a restaurant." She called the Victorian upholsterer "the house dress-maker," who "pads and puffs his seats as though they were to form the furniture of a lunatic's cell"; the shape of the easy chair she regarded as "dropsical." Contrary to appearances, large, sturdy Louis XV *fauteuils* are perfectly comfortable, as long as one sits up in them; any guest so weak in character as to slouch in front of me may literally feel the pain of my displeasure. It is cruel in our day, however, for a host

to ridicule a guest, as the Baron de Charlus did, for sitting by mistake in a Directory *chauffeuse* after directing him to sit in the Louis XIV *chaire*.

The conservative following of the harpsichord predates the present vogue of "ancient music." The Hubbard firm specializes in reproductions of eighteenth-century instruments; stands with fluted or cabriolet legs are available. A harpsichord is perfect for painting pastoral or apotheosis scenes on; one must marry either a musician or an artist. This instrument is, however, only a substitute for that grandest of all plutocratic excesses, the pipe organ; as the late Virgil Fox once said, "Home is where the organ is."

A stairway treatment with exposed pipes, as at the Frick house, might be recommended in an age of low ceilings.

There is, of course, no television in the Conservative House, but there is Tiepolo. Those who feel they have to sit in the dark and look at something may turn on the picture lights and peer at Rinaldo and Armida without subjecting themselves to commercials. Other electronic innovations, insofar as they are necessary, must be concealed. The electronic clock is not necessary. The anthropomorphic bronze mantel clock, which shows signs of having been made by human hands, demands only the service of winding.

It is not wrong to love these objects; they are to be enjoyed until the moment when duty demands their sacrifice. That is the doctrine of the Higher Materialism, to be distinguished from the conspicuous and acquisitive materialism of the *bourgeois* (who finds it incomprehensible) and the envious and Manichaeism of the socialist (who finds it criminal). The only alternative is personal, not political; it is the monastery. Nevertheless, though it may lack a chapel and a priest's hole, the Conservative House is a place where cross and icon are revered, and is a sanctuary of another sort. □

William Rusher, with a reply by Joseph W. Bishop, Jr.

THE TRUTH ABOUT JOE McCARTHY

An exchange.

Joe McCarthy was "condemned" by the U.S. Senate on December 2, 1954, and died in Bethesda Naval Hospital on May 2, 1957, so nobody under 45 in America today can have any very dependable personal recollection of the "McCarthy controversy" that caused such a furor in the first years of the decade of the fifties. Since a good many of *The American Spectator's* readers are under that age, it is a pity that its December issue gave space to Joseph W. Bishop, Jr.'s account of various aspects of that controversy, for it is easily the most inaccurate and misleading article I have ever read on a subject notoriously conducive to misstatements. It is absolutely studied with falsehoods, half-truths, slanders, innuendoes, and simple errors.

According to a footnote, Professor Bishop's diatribe is "based on" a recent book by John Adams, who served as general counsel to the Army during McCarthy's investigation of certain security problems in that branch of the armed forces. Actually, the article is

William Rusher is the Publisher of National Review and a nationally syndicated columnist. Joseph W. Bishop, Jr. is the Sam Harris Professor of Law at the Yale Law School.

little more than an extended rehash of a famous episode during those hearings when Joseph Welch, a Boston lawyer retained by the Army, whipped out a handkerchief and purported to cry into it. The sight unquestionably moved many people watching on television, and Professor Bishop is clearly one of them; but the incident can hardly substitute for an explanation of what the "McCarthy controversy" was all about. For that, Professor Bishop relies on his own rancid and faulty recollection, plus a stew of unsubstantiated allegations so vicious that by themselves they would serve as a splendid example of the very "McCarthyism" he is supposedly complaining about.

Let's watch this accomplished mud-gunner at work. Early on, he says of McCarthy in 1950, "Those who knew anything about him, mostly newspapermen, thought very little of him; and many of them strongly suspected him of taking bribes from large corporations, such as Pepsi-Cola, to push bills they favored." No proof, please note; not even a flat accusation—just a statement that unnamed persons "strongly suspected" McCarthy of wrongdoing. Later in the very same paragraph, Professor Bishop sneers that "it was Joe's way,

when asked for substantiation of his charges, simply to leap to new accusations."

Leaping to a new accusation, Bishop dredges up one of the oldest and lowest of them all. Writing of Roy Cohn, McCarthy's counsel, and G. David Schine, a friend of Cohn's who was also on the committee's staff, the "Sam Harris Professor of Law at the Yale Law School" gets off this beauty: "Schine was a handsome rich kid, a recent graduate of Harvard although rather lightly furnished in the upper story, with whom Cohn had become infatuated. The basis of the infatuation was never clear. Some people, of course, suggested a homosexual affair, but there was never any evidence of that, and Schine, at least, was clearly heterosexual. (He eventually married a former Miss Universe.)" How's that for smearing somebody without going in for any heavy lifting, such as producing a little evidence? ("[T]here was never any evidence of that!").

In the next paragraph, speculating on why McCarthy stuck by Cohn and Schine, Bishop swings his slime-bucket yet again: "Their presence helped to dispel an anti-Semitic taint in McCarthy's record." A taint put there by Professor Bishop: I lived through the whole McCarthy con-

trovery and never heard of it till now.

If you are getting tired of out-and-out baseless smears, how about a little guilt by association? Savor this masterpiece of the genre: "A succession of politicians and assorted rabble-rousers had done well [denouncing Communism] in the thirties: Martin Dies, Karl Mundt (who later, as a senator, played a shabby role in the Army-McCarthy hearings), Father Coughlin, J. Parnell Thomas, Gerald L.K. Smith." McCarthy, Bishop goes on to tell us, out-red-baited them all.

But look at that collection of names: Martin Dies and Karl Mundt, both perfectly honorable members of Congress over periods of many years (typically, Bishop never gets around to saying what was "shabby" about Mundt's role in the Army-McCarthy hearings); Father Coughlin, a demagogic priest silenced by his bishop; J. Parnell Thomas, another congressman, who was ultimately convicted of accepting kickbacks from his staff; and Gerald L.K. Smith, America's leading anti-Semite! Do they teach you such tactics at Yale Law these days?

No wonder misstatements come easily to Bishop; he can't even get an ordinary fact straight when he is presumably trying. McCarthy's early

"obscurity," he tells us, "ended abruptly in February 1952 when he delivered a stump speech to the Ohio Valley Women's Republican Club at a Lincoln Day dinner in Wheeling, West Virginia." Wrong, by two full years—the date was February 9, 1950. That fact, in turn, makes hash out of Bishop's charge that McCarthy was "looking for a good issue on which to seek reelection in 1952." He was, in fact, only halfway through his first term, and thus nearly three years from his next encounter with the voters. As Bishop piously observes in another context, "It is always easier to get the media to broadcast sensational accusations than lackluster facts disproving them." He ought to know.

But enough of what Professor Bishop *does*. Let me regale you for a while with what he *doesn't* do—his errors of omission, that is to say.

A careful reader of Bishop's article will notice various obscure references to "Fort Monmouth," an Army Signal Corps Installation in New Jersey. At one point we get a glimpse of a 15-page letter by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, purportedly containing (only?) unevaluated raw data on "more than thirty suspected subversives" at that base. Later Bishop, in the course of his summation, tells us that "the scientists employed at Fort Monmouth . . . all were ultimately vindicated." Just about what you would expect—if you buy Professor Bishop's version of the McCarthy story, lock, stock, and barrel.

What Bishop never tells us, however, is that Fort Monmouth was a highly sensitive installation, deeply involved in research on radar and other subjects of great interest to the Soviet Union. As a matter of fact, two friends of Julius Rosenberg (who even Bishop admits was a Communist spy, and "far more dangerous" than Alger Hiss) had worked at Fort Monmouth in the early 1940s, and fled to the Soviet Union in 1950 to avoid questioning about their subsequent activities. One died there; the other apparently still survives.

Fort Monmouth, therefore, was a perfectly proper—in fact, a high-priority—target for investigation by the Senate Committee on Government Operations (of which McCarthy was chairman in 1953-54), if indeed more than 30 people stationed there, all or most of them "scientists," were the subject of negative security data in the files of the FBI. Why, though, one may ask, weren't any authentic security risks among them turned up by McCarthy's investigation? Because, for one thing, that was precisely the investigation that was derailed by the so-

called "Army-McCarthy hearings." Before the Senate voted to "condemn" McCarthy later that year (*not* for his investigation of Fort Monmouth, by the way), the Democrats had recaptured the Senate, and McCarthy's days as a senatorial investigator were effectively over.

But Professor Bishop is guilty of an even more deceptive omission, in connection with the incident that serves as the centerpiece of his article: Joseph Welch's teary speech. To hear Bishop tell it, McCarthy (of course) started it all: "On June 9, 1954, Welch's subtle mockery aroused McCarthy's wrath, and he started off on one of his characteristic (and *entirely gratuitous*) smears" (emphasis added). McCarthy's sin, it seems, consisted of parading on the TV screens of a watching nation the damaging fact that one of Welch's young legal associates named Fred Fisher, whom he brought with him to the Army job, had been a member of the National Lawyers' Guild, an organization that Bishop insists had begun honorably but which he concedes "had been infiltrated and finally dominated by Communists."

Now why do you suppose McCarthy brought the subject up? Bishop carefully doesn't tell you. He merely states that "Welch's subtle mockery aroused McCarthy's wrath" and led to this "entirely gratuitous" smear.

The facts, as you probably suspect by now, are rather different. Fisher's membership in the National Lawyers' Guild has never, so far as I know, been adequately explained, but it certainly doesn't date from those good old days when, according to Bishop, the Guild was "founded by Jerome Frank and other honest liberals as a counterweight to the American Bar Association." Fisher was a member when the Guild was a well-known Communist front—was, in fact, on the Attorney General's official list of subversive organizations. Calling attention to Fisher's connection with it, therefore, was hardly a "smear." But

what provoked McCarthy to raise the matter?

Welch, a noted Boston attorney with a face and manner that reminded many people of Uriah Heep, was indeed adept at "subtle mockery," and that day his mockery had taken a most curious form: Did Roy Cohn (whom Welch was questioning) truly know of any security risks at Fort Monmouth? Did he, in fact, know of any security risks *anywhere*? If so, I implore you, sir—I *implore* you—to reveal their names "before the sun goes down"!

That was the point at which McCarthy, his patience snapping, intervened to suggest that if Welch was really so all-fired eager to locate security risks, he might start by looking into the aforesaid Mr. Fisher on his own staff.

"Entirely gratuitous"? Hardly.

I was fascinated to learn from Bishop's article that "Adams thinks, as I have always thought, that Welch, anticipating the Senator's attack on Fisher, had prepared and memorized [his rebuttal] well in advance." Given the way in which Welch led with his chin (or rather Fisher's chin), as described above, I think this is entirely probable. Welch had undoubtedly pondered how to turn a McCarthy attack on Fisher's membership in the Guild to advantage. But note the implication: If Welch in fact deliberately baited McCarthy into dragging Fred Fisher's record onto national television in order to weep over the cruelty of his doing so, his subsequent performance takes the Hypocrisy Prize of all time.

Welch's lachrymose sonorities assuredly went over brilliantly with the housewives who had been lured from their soap operas to watch him: "Until this moment, Senator, I think I never really gauged your cruelty or your recklessness. . . . Little did I dream that you would be so reckless and so cruel as to do an injury to that lad. . . . Let us not assassinate this lad further, Senator. Have you no sense of decency, sir, at long last? Have you left no sense of decency?" He wiped a few crocodile tears from his rheumy eyes.

(As a final turn of the screw, it is interesting to note that McCarthy was not in fact even dragging Fisher and his Communist-front affiliation into the limelight: The *New York Times* had written extensively on the subject weeks earlier.)

I apologize to Uriah Heep for comparing him to this cynical, gold-plated old phony.

For the rest, the Bishop article is a long string of unsupported accusations that would make a vulture retch: "[McCarthy] stayed in the Senate until he drank himself to death in 1957. . . . He was a pariah; the Senate chamber emptied when he rose to speak." Both statements are utterly false. I was counsel to a Senate committee myself in 1956-57, and met McCarthy repeatedly (though I never worked for him). He had at one time been a heavy drinker, but in his last years was cautiously moderate; he died of a severe attack of hepatitis. He kept right on with a senator's usual chores up almost until the end; his funeral service, an event conducted (quite exceptionally) in the Senate chamber itself, was the most moving scene I witnessed there in my 17 months on the staff. (Remember, 22 senators—a majority of the Republican members, including minority leader William Knowland—voted *against* "condemning" him.)

"[H]is dominant quality was fraudulence. He would tell any lie, assassinate any character, to get a headline. . . . If there had been a significant Communist vote in Wisconsin, he would have said flattering things about Marx, Lenin, and Stalin. . . . His basic motives were to be re-elected and to grab as many dishonest dollars as came within his reach."

How fortunate that we have, to tell us the truth about this monster, a man with the distaste for smearing, name-calling, and guilt-by-association, the habits of factual precision, and the sheer intellectual honesty of Joseph W. Bishop, Jr., Sam Harris Professor of Law at the Yale Law School.

For anyone who wants to know the truth about the Communist penetration of American society in the 1930s and 40s and about the "McCarthy controversy" that resulted from it, the facts are, happily, available—in sober, unemotional volumes that tell the story accurately and well. Get from your library a copy of James Burnham's *The Web of Subversion* (John Day, 1954), and decide for yourself whether the issue was a legitimate one. Then, on Joe McCarthy and the controversies that whirled around him (up to 1953), read Buckley and Bozell's painstaking analysis, *McCarthy and*



His Enemies (Regnery, 1954). Finally, if you are interested in my own assessment of the man as I knew him, in relation to his tumultuous times, there is a chapter about him in my book, *Special Counsel* (Arlington House, 1968).

On reflection, it occurs to me that the Bishop article may inadvertently perform, for its readers, one important service after all. Its sheer essential *meanness*—the raucous hatred that blazes out of Bishop's prose after the passage of thirty years—may lead uninvolved readers to suspect things about the equities of that distant controversy that they would never have learned at the knee of some typical liberal historian of those times. As for the sloppiness of Bishop's way with facts, his repeated descent into the very tactics that "McCarthyism" is supposed to epitomize, and the general intellectual slovenliness of his performance, however, these unhappily tell us some important truths about him. He is a disgrace to his university, and to his profession. □

Joseph W. Bishop, Jr. replies:
I have only a few comments on Mr. Rusher's agitated letter:

1. My article was rather more than an "extended rehash" of the episode in which Joseph Welch made his well-known speech about McCarthy. I devoted less than one-sixth of the piece to it. Mr. Rusher's lengthy and intemperate attack on Welch seems quite pointless. Apparently any mention of Welch is enough to set him off.

2. My statement about McCarthy and Pepsi-Cola is based on what Adams says in his book. Adams says likewise that the Senator "was also given \$10,000 by Lustron Corporation, makers of pre-fabricated houses, when the company was looking for funds from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation."

3. I merely reported a fact when I said that "some people . . . suggested a homosexual affair." I made it as plain as possible that the rumor was unsupported by evidence and also that I gave it no credence myself. I advanced a quite different explanation.

4. The allegations of anti-Semitism were based on an attack against Anna M. Rosenberg, made when the Senate was considering her confirmation as Assistant Secretary of Defense, an attack which Adams says "had been orchestrated by McCarthy and his friends."

5. As for Karl Mundt's "shabby role," Adams says, "Mundt quickly earned his nickname as the Leaning Tower of Putty." He was also called "the tormented mushroom." I think

these descriptions seemed just to most of those who watched the hearings.

6. Mr. Rusher is quite right in saying that the Wheeling speech was delivered in 1950. I erred in trusting my memory. But the mistake hardly affects the validity of my criticisms of the Senator.

7. Fort Monmouth was undoubtedly a "sensitive installation," where much classified research was performed. That is surely not evidence that the researchers, or any of them, were Communist spies. Nor is the allegation (assuming it to be true) that two friends of Julius Rosenberg had worked there during World War II. As for the 30-odd employees accused by McCarthy, Adams says, "before long, 25 of them were restored to full duty. The other eight had to wait five years before the courts rescued them." Neither Adams nor I suggested that the Senate voted to condemn McCarthy for his Fort Monmouth investigation; as I said, the vote was based on his abuse of other senators.

8. Mr. Rusher's attack on Fred Fisher is as "gratuitous" as was McCarthy's. Fisher may have had Communist or leftist sympathies when he joined the National Lawyers' Guild as a student, or he may have been merely naive: I don't know, and I doubt very much that McCarthy knew. But he had left the Guild long before 1954. In any case, he was not a "security risk," for he had never been employed by the government or had any access to classified information.

9. Adams says that "McCarthy was a prodigious drinker" and that the last time Adams saw him "he poured about six ounces of Fleishman's gin into a glass [and] added a little tonic and a lump of ice." His hands shook so that "he was having trouble drinking, and gin trickled from the corners of his mouth when he took a sip." I myself once saw him knock down three stiff cocktails before lunch. I think it reasonable to infer that drinking played a large role in his fatal liver disease.

10. My opinion that McCarthy's "dominant quality was fraudulence" is simply my opinion. Mr. Rusher, like everyone, is entitled to his own.

It will be noted that many of the statements which incensed Mr. Rusher are based on what John Adams has to say. I have no reason to question Adams's veracity, and certainly few people had a better opportunity to observe the Senator. In every instance in which I have personal knowledge about his statements, he is correct.

Mr. Rusher's little list of approved reading does not include Thomas C. Reeves's *The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy: A Biography*, published in

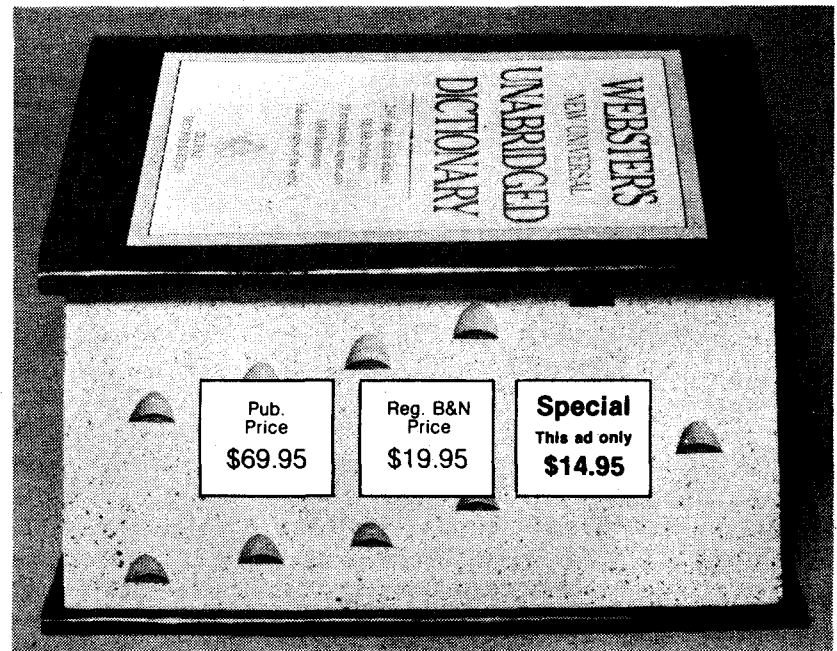
1982, which is the most recent and exhaustive account of the Senator. It seems to me reasonably objective. So far as I can see, nothing in it contradicts my statements.

In a way, I was glad to see Mr. Rusher's letter, as well as half a dozen others of similar tone and tenor, worthy of the Senator himself. I had felt a little guilty about attacking a politi-

cian who, I wrongly supposed, had no supporters left. Mr. Rusher does the cause of conservatism no service by his vehement defense of the indefensible.

I hope that Mr. Rusher's blood pressure is down again. I earnestly counsel him not to read any more material critical of Senator McCarthy. Such tantrums cannot be good for his health. □

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THE NATION'S PULSE



THE DEATH OF THE JACKSON WING

by Fred Barnes

Former Vice President Walter F. Mondale is not exactly a stalwart of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority, the hawkish, anti-Communist, aggressively pro-Israel faction in the Democratic party. Yet by sounding slightly less dovish than usual, Mondale managed to elicit words of praise from CDM leaders last November. Penn Kemble, the chairman of CDM's executive committee, said he and others were "encouraged" by Mondale's "general tone of realism." Mondale is "less clearly left-wing" in foreign policy than Jimmy Carter and is "acceptable" to most CDM members, noted Austin Ranney, a leader of the organization.

The warming of the relationship between CDM and Mondale, surely an ideological odd couple, is a small thing by itself. But it touches on something bigger—on a trend of enormous significance in the Democratic party. That trend, now practically played out, is the decline and fall of the Jackson wing of the party. That's the late Senator Henry (Scoop) Jackson of Washington, not the Reverend Jesse. For two decades, Henry Jackson and his followers (mostly CDM members) exerted a hard-line influence on Democratic policy-making. They were often unsuccessful, failing miserably in attempts to steer Carter away from his meek, guilt-ridden foreign policy. But they had their moments even under Carter, pushing him toward a boost, not a cut, in military spending. Since Jackson's death last summer, however, no heir has stepped forward and the CDM faithful are left with trying to reconcile themselves to an old foe, Mondale. The Jackson-CDM grouping, says Democratic pollster Patrick Caddell, "isn't a wing; it's a feather." Caddell is right.

To see how this affects the Democratic party, you only need look at the fight for the presidential nomination. There used to be two magnetic poles in the party, Jackson

and George McGovern, hard-line and accommodationist, tugging on the candidates during nomination struggles. Today there is only one, and as a candidate himself this year, McGovern boasts correctly of having drawn his colleagues to the left on such issues as the Middle East and Central America. All eight candidates found something critical to say about President Reagan's decision to invade Grenada. None liked the Kissinger Commission report. All seem to blame Reagan more than the Soviets for the lull in arms control talks. For six of the eight (except McGovern and Jesse Jackson), their only concession to the hard-line approach is support for a small increase in defense spending, one which would amount to a sharp reduction from Reagan's expenditure level.

A major factor in this leftward tilt is the makeup of the Democratic electorate in the caucuses and primaries. While two-thirds of the nation's Democrats identify themselves as moderates or conservatives, liberals dominate the presidential selection process. This obviously works against a hard-line presidential candidate, an unabashed anti-Communist, say, and it contributed to Jackson's pathetic

showings in the 1972 and 1976 races. In 1984, it keeps potential hard-liners such as Senators John Glenn of Ohio and Fritz Hollings of South Carolina and former Governor Reubin Askew of Florida from articulating a hawkish position. They aren't doves, but they emphasize all the peace overtures and defense cuts they would make as President. Asked in Iowa last December if he favored deployment of Pershing missiles in West Germany, Glenn whispered hastily that he did, then launched into his plan for reneging on the commitment to deploy cruise missiles in Europe as well. And Glenn's first wave of campaign TV commercials played on fears of nuclear war—one showed a shrinking nuclear explosion—and cast him as a peace candidate.

The reflexively soft-line approach of the Democratic presidential candidates is a symptom of the crumbling of the Jackson wing. The causes lie elsewhere. One, of course, is the reform of party rules governing presidential delegate selection, which took power out of the hands of centrist Democratic leaders in the South, West, and cities and gave it to liberal activists. McGovern benefited immediately from this reform in capturing the presidential nomination in

1972. So did Carter four years later, his ambiguity leaving many liberals with the impression he was one of them. It turned out that on foreign policy he was, but not on domestic matters. In any case, the rules changes and the increase in the number of primaries (from 17 in 1968 to 35 in 1980) ruined Jackson's presidential bids in 1972 and 1976. It did not help that he was not charismatic. Leaders of the party-regular variety adored him, but they were vastly outnumbered by liberal activists, who prevailed.

Jackson lost ignominiously, and a political tradition evaporated with his defeats. It was the ideological tradition begun by Franklin Roosevelt and championed by Harry Truman, John Kennedy, and Lyndon Johnson. Charles Krauthammer, writing in *Time* recently, dubbed it "liberal internationalism"—strong defense and interventionist, anti-Communist foreign policy coupled with full-throttle, Great Society liberalism in domestic policy. Jackson was its last influential advocate. "Why has adopting the Jackson stance appealed to no presidential candidate's opportunism?" said Joshua Muravchik, former CDM executive director. "It must have something to do with his presidential campaign failures. The reason it's unattractive is that Jackson couldn't make it work."

But the decline of the Jackson wing involves more than the absence of a presidential contender. Jackson simply has no heir at all, candidate or otherwise, and this is important. Normally, it is individuals in politics who get press attention, not ideologies. This, in turn, gives their ideology national visibility, which serves to bring its adherents together as a movement. The logical heir to Jackson, of course, was Senator Pat Moynihan of New York. But Jackson's death was accompanied, Krauthammer notes accurately, by Moynihan's "abdication." In the 1970s, Moynihan was a more forceful and persuasive spokesman for the



Fred Barnes is National Political Reporter for the Baltimore Sun.

Jackson viewpoint than Jackson was, and many assumed that Moynihan's drift to the left was temporary and prompted only by re-election concerns in 1982. It wasn't. Once a neoconservative, then something of a neoliberal, Moynihan has emerged as a conventional, unadorned liberal, one who eagerly endorsed Mondale for President.

If Moynihan retains hawkish tendencies, he is successfully suppressing them. He opposed the invasion of Grenada, arguing that democracy couldn't be imposed at gunpoint. Later, he conceded he should have used different language to explain his opposition, but he remained opposed. Rather than invade, Reagan should have used events on Grenada, particularly the murder of Cuban-backed leader Maurice Bishop, as grounds for making overtures to Fidel Castro, he said. Moynihan endorsed the nuclear freeze, and said his re-election amounted to a mandate for pursuit of the freeze. He voted against the MX missile, calling it a first-strike weapon. He is sharply critical of American policy in Central America. He found flaws in the Kissinger report, complaining that it contained no evidence that the Soviet-Cuban influence in Central America was a serious threat to the United States. Moynihan says no one should be surprised by these positions, since the core of his foreign policy position had always been a "Wilsonian" concern for international law. The United States violated international law by invading Grenada, he said, but doesn't by backing the anti-Sandinista contras. The distinction Moynihan makes is that the Grenada invasion was not sanctioned by the Organization of American States while the activity of the contras is permissible under international law as a response to the export of revolution by the Sandinistas. So he backs continued aid to the contras.

Moynihan's abdication has troubled many of his former allies. One of them was recently reading his book about his experience as ambassador to the United Nations and was amazed—and saddened—by the contrast between his views then and now. Others are bluntly critical of him. Elliott Abrams, a one-time Senate aide to Moynihan and now the assistant secretary of state for human rights, attributes the demise of the Jackson wing to two factors: "Senator Jackson is no longer with us and Senator Moynihan is no longer with us." Moynihan was "the natural heir," Abrams said. "When he came to the Senate [in 1976], he was viewed as the natural heir. He has clearly abdicated that role. I don't know why. . . . What Pat is doing now is politically damaging to him. His fame

and power comes from being Pat Moynihan. Liberals are a dime a dozen."

If Moynihan won't be Moynihan, why not John Glenn as heir? He, after all, has a military background, was dubious about SALT II (voting against it in committee), and supports a military buildup. The problem with Glenn is that he simply isn't enough of

a party man; he's distrusted by party regulars, just as Carter, another military man, was. Some of the vigor of the Jackson wing came from its staunch support for Israel and for emigration of Soviet Jews. Glenn lacks the pro-Israel credential. And he also lacks the necessary affinity to organized labor, once a bulwark of the Jackson wing. Besides, Ben Wat-

tenberg, the writer and CDM leader, says there are doubts over whether "Glenn understands the geo-political equation." People like Wattenberg and Abrams have never considered Glenn part of the Jackson wing.

Abrams himself represents another reason for the faltering of the Jackson wing. If Moynihan abdicated, Abrams and others who gave the Jackson wing

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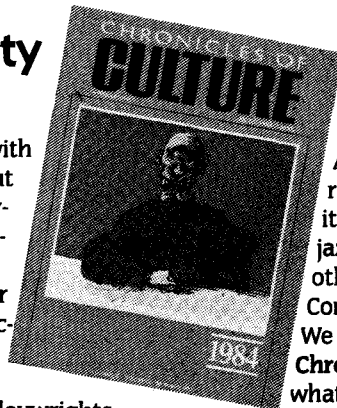
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much of its intellectual strength pulled out. Abrams has become a Republican, giving up on the Democratic party in 1976 after anyone associated with CDM was blackballed in the Carter Administration. "That demonstrated to all of us that the Democratic party was a McGovernite party," he said. One of those barred from a Carter job was Jeane Kirkpatrick, who had been recommended as ambassador to Israel. A Carter aide boasted of blocking her nomination. Now, as President Reagan's UN ambassador, she wonders about "the persistence of this peculiar Democratic resistance to the

preferences of ordinary Americans [for] a strong defense and a reasonably but prudently assertive foreign policy." Others who didn't get posts under Carter but did under Reagan include Richard Perle, Jackson's defense expert who is an assistant defense secretary, and Charles Horner, a former Moynihan aide now at the State Department.

Apart from its intellectual elite, the Jackson wing has lost its base among labor leaders. AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland is an anti-Communist, but not in the fashion of George

Meany. He can't be. The unions—steel, building trades, crafts—which promoted Meany's hard-line positions have sagged in clout in the labor movement, and the liberal unions representing government workers and communications employees have gained influence. The AFL-CIO no longer plays a major foreign policy role. Kirkland, for instance, can't unabashedly back Reagan's policy in El Salvador because the Administration has failed to get the government there to bring to justice the murderers of two AFL-CIO officials. And Kirkland's stress is mostly on domestic policy anyway, namely combating Reaganomics.

Even before Jackson's death, Kirkland signaled the decline of the hard-line wing of the Democratic party. Though he was a founder of CDM, Kirkland largely abandoned his involvement in the group after the 1980 election. Instead, he threw in with the national Democratic party in spite of its dovishness, got labor officials installed on all its panels, and began clearing the way for the AFL-CIO's pre-primary endorsement of Mondale. Kirkland started a trend, Jackson's death accelerated it, Moynihan's actions did nothing to impede it, and CDM, all but irrelevant, merely followed suit. And the Jackson wing died.

EMINENTOES



THE SICKNESS OF COMRADE 'DROPOFF

by Adrian Karatnycky

Recent assessments of Yuri Andropov's first year in power have read remarkably like obituaries. In keeping with the genre, they have sought to locate Andropov's place in Soviet history, have traversed his life's course through the Soviet institutional labyrinth, and above all have exhibited a solemn tendency to overvalue the role of their subject in shaping the present.

The obituary-like tone of such discourse is of course not without basis. Andropov has been out of public view for nearly a half-year. In November, he became the first leader in Soviet history to miss the annual military parade celebrating the Bolshevik revolution. In December his ashen, trembling visage was absent from a key meeting of the Communist Party's Central Committee. And several days later he was a no-show at the opening session of the USSR's rubber stamp parliament—the Supreme Soviet. The last American to see Andropov was nonagenarian Averell Harriman who asserted that at their June encounter Yuri "seemed well and vigorous." Yet, Harriman's assurance to the contrary, rumors about Andropov's health have been circulating since the summer. He is said to be suffering (alternatively or simultaneous-

ly) from kidney failure, a weak heart, and Parkinson's disease. Unidentified Soviet sources suggest his protracted absence is attributable to nothing more than a cold. They make it clear that Andropov officially remains undisputed Soviet leader.

Whatever the flaws in 1983's year-end "obituaries" of Andropov, we can be thankful that they did not read like eulogies, which is surely what they would have been had Andropov died at about the same time as Leonid Brezhnev. We might recall some of the nonsense spouted on Andropov's accession. The *Washington Post's* Charles Fenyvesi and Sovietologist Jerry Hough staked a claim for Andropov as a closet liberal and active proponent of détente, Hough characterizing Andropov's climb to the

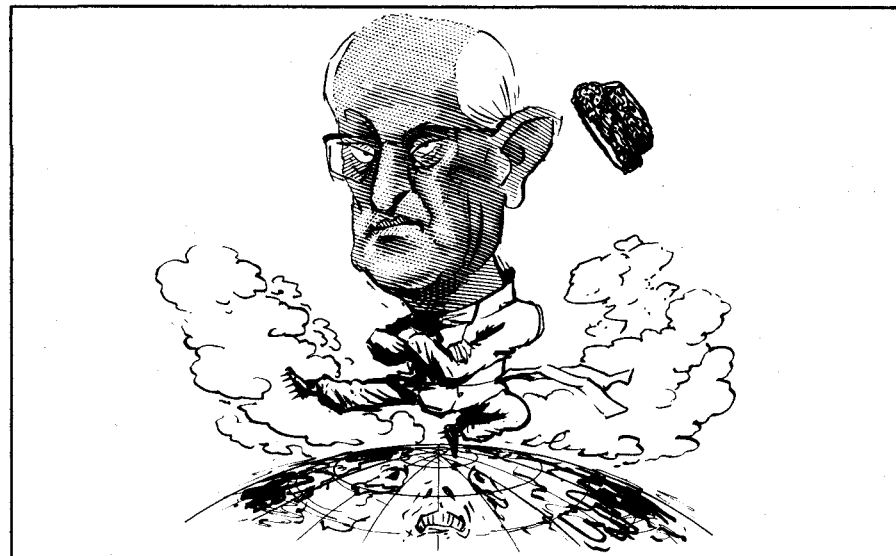
top as "one of the most favorable developments to have occurred in the Soviet Union in recent years." A mythology arose around Andropov's putative tastes in fiction (Jacqueline Susann) and music (Chubby Checker, Frank Sinatra, and Peggy Lee). Harrison Salisbury claimed for Comrade Yuri a knowledge of English and a keen familiarity with American culture. Even Vice President Bush joined in the fun, telling the *Christian Science Monitor*: "My view of Andropov is that some people make this KGB thing sound horrendous. Maybe I speak defensively as a former head of the CIA. But leave out the operational side of the KGB—the naughty things they allegedly do." In time, Edward Jay Epstein, among others, demonstrated the implausibility of

these claims in his justly famous *New Republic* essay which put to rest much of the wishful thinking and outright disinformation.

More recently, several book-length studies have demolished what remains of the early version of Andropov as a liberal, reform-minded Soviet leader. While in some matters of fact and interpretation there may be dispute, among Andropov's biographers there is virtual unanimity on one matter—that he is nothing if not a ruthless and capable operative.

The most scrupulously documented of the recent Andropov biographies is Arnold Beichman and Mikhail Bernstam's *Andropov: New Challenge to the West*,¹ a wellspring of insight particularly on the early Andropov. The Soviet leader's formative experience was integrally linked with the Gulag, which saw Andropov and his Party cronies "living in a prison camp with forced laborers." As Beichman and Bernstam report, "Andropov lived side-by-side with the Gulag system and saw it in operation each day." On becoming first secretary of a local Young Communist League, he "assisted in the administration of a province, half of which could be regarded as a Russian Auschwitz, minus the gas chambers." During World War II he moved up in rank to assume the post of first secretary of the Karelo-Finnish Young Communist

¹ Stein & Day, \$16.95.



Adrian Karatnycky is research director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute and associate editor of *Workers Under Communism*, a quarterly journal.

League, and supervised the recruitment of women and children for forced labor in rock quarries and in the timber industry.

In 1956, as Soviet Ambassador to Hungary, Andropov exhibited some of the traits that served him so well in his long march through Party and state institutions. According to Bela Kiraly, military commander of Budapest during the Hungarian Revolution, even at the moment Soviet troops began their attack on the city, Andropov was to be found in Prime Minister Imre Nagy's office in the Hungarian parliament, assuring the popular leader that a Soviet attack was out of the question.

After helping to oversee "normalization" in Budapest, Andropov was transferred to a post on the Central Committee. For one decade he worked diligently at extending his influence inside the Party's higher reaches. In 1967, when Vladimir Semichastny was purged from the KGB chairmanship, Andropov was Brezhnev's surprise choice to head the Soviet security apparatus.

It is, of course, Andropov's fifteen-year tenure in the KGB, the longest in Soviet history, which tells us most about his abilities. As Zhores Medvedev reminds us in *Andropov*,² his concise, well-written study, before Andropov all Soviet security chiefs with the exception of progenitor Feliks Dzerzhinsky had brief, tumultuous careers which ended in either violent death or political disgrace: "Andropov is the only man who not only survived the job but also made himself more influential politically in the process."

Under Andropov the KGB extended its scope of operations into new areas. Abroad, the security service increased its efforts in the arena of scientific, industrial, and technological espionage. It expanded its support for terrorist activities and, indeed, played a role in creating a "terror network" of Palestinian commandos, Italian "Red Brigades," Japanese "Red Army" operatives, Basque separatists, and the like.

At home, Andropov's tenure saw the lengthening of prison terms for political offenses; the expansion of the use of psychiatric incarceration for political opponents; a decade-long campaign of intimidation and repression aimed at the dissident movement which Andropov, more explicitly than any other Party leader, sought to link to the "special services of imperialism." Finally, Andropov's policies revealed him to be a strong supporter of Russian national chauvinism, while brutally suppressing

manifestations of Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Georgian, Armenian, and Jewish national sentiment. In *Yuri Andropov: A Secret Passage Into the Kremlin*,³ Vladimir Solovyov and Elena Klepikova describe chauvinistic *Rodina* (Motherland) societies, which experienced astronomical growth in the 1960s and 70s with Andropov's

³ Macmillan, \$15.95.

tacit support. Such mass-circulation journals as *Molodaya Gvardiya* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (the Young Communist League newspaper) printed articles glorifying the Czarist past and engaged in anti-Semitic vilification. Even the *samizdat* Russophile journal *Vyeche* was allowed to circulate freely for years, while the KGB conducted a harsh campaign of repression against

the Russian democratic opposition.

This picture of the KGB is hardly reassuring. Yet such details of ruthlessness tell us less about Andropov's psychology than about the system in which he functions. And this is precisely the point. In the USSR of the post-Stalin era, the general secretary cannot be an absolute despot. However, the system he heads must retain its despotic character, and he must

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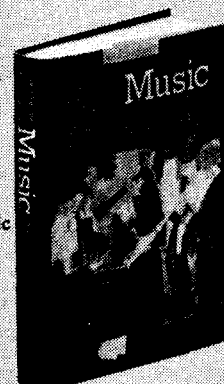
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² W.W. Norton, \$14.95.

defend the interests of the Party, Army, and security apparatus as well as surmount any challenge to internal Soviet stability.

Yuri Andropov was therefore selected as Party general secretary precisely because as KGB chairman he had demonstrated a capacity to manage internal discontent and to deal with eruptions of protest in the Soviet Empire's unruly colonies. He had demonstrated shrewdness in manipulating Great Russian nationalism in the service of Soviet stability while suppressing national sentiment among the non-Russians who will soon constitute an absolute majority within the Soviet Union. He had earned the support of the armed forces and his own KGB. Zhores Medvedev informs us that Andropov in his KGB post "worked very closely with the army. The KGB is responsible for guarding all important military objects and missile launching. . . . The army cannot fire nuclear missiles without the KGB, as their officers form part of the launching teams." Soviet actions in Ethiopia, Angola, and Afghanistan likewise required cooperation between KGB intelligence sources and the military. Finally, an Andropov regime held the most promise for some measure of controlled economic reform and a

campaign to increase labor discipline and crack down on corruption.

During his first year as general secretary, Andropov's major domestic actions were fully consonant with his background in the security service. He promoted an unprecedented number of KGB operatives to important government and Party posts. He moved aggressively to shake up domestic policies. In early 1983 an unprecedented round-up of people "infringing on labor discipline" was initiated under the code name "Operation Trawl." Muscovites queueing up for foodstuffs and goods during working hours were checked for truancy from work. In the official press the regime launched a campaign against incompetence and shirking. Young Communist League activists in the Ukraine conducted a campaign known as "Operation Chronometer." As explained in the league's newspaper, the avowed purpose of the campaign was:

to explain the reasons for loss of work time, and in the process to identify the culprits of, and analyze the causes of, the tardiness and idleness common at enterprises, and the delays in the provision of raw materials, specified components, and equipment for Komsomol shock construction projects.

Participants were urged to fill in the blanks of newspaper coupons with names of individuals guilty of violating labor discipline.

Such a renewed campaign of internal control is hardly the cure for sluggish economic growth. Similar cam-

paigns did not work in the past and were quickly jettisoned. Indeed, after an initial flurry of round-ups, complete with daytime raids of public steam-baths, the outward signs of a labor discipline effort appear to have subsided.

There is evidence, however, that Andropov has at last embarked on some limited economic experimentation aimed at reversing poor Soviet economic performance. On January 1, an industrial economic experiment was launched throughout five select Soviet ministries: the USSR Ministry of Heavy and Transport Machine-Building; the USSR Ministry of Electrical Equipment Industries; the Ukrainian Ministry of Food Industry; the Byelorussian Ministry of Light Industry; and the Lithuanian Ministry of Local Industry.

The announced reform is aimed at decentralizing economic decision-making by leaving a greater share of profits at the disposal of local management. It allows for wider differentials in basic wage scales as an incentive for greater worker productivity. The plan also agrees to compensate management for losses incurred while new technology is installed and started up. Yet there's no reason to expect much to come of this plan, if only because it is highly restricted and results will not be in for years.

The kindest thing that might be said of Andropov's first year is Zhores Medvedev's observation that under Andropov "policy is probably better constructed, better implemented, more skillfully presented, *but it is still the same conservative policy without any sign of liberal or democratic trends.*" Yet what more could be expected of a system that is characterized by continuity, stability, and "conservatism."

Perhaps it would be useful to be reminded of the sources of that stability, of what might be called the pillars of Soviet rule.

The first is the pre-eminence of the Party. The underpinning of that primacy is the *nomenklatura* system, through which the Party rewards its loyalists with key posts and thus exerts total control over all spheres of social, political, and economic life. No Soviet leader will challenge this principle.

Second is the policy of Russification. With the exception of a brief, limited relaxation in the 1920s, the Soviet government has pursued a policy of subjugating non-Russian nationalities and assimilating them into a variant of Russian culture. With demographic trends leading to a majority non-Russian population by the end of the century, Soviet leaders have stepped up the pace of linguistic and cultural homogenization. In a major speech on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the USSR in December 1982, Andropov revived the concept of the "fusion of nations" as the "final goal" of the Party's nationalities policy. Since then, for example, a purge of Party cultural figures has been initiated in the Ukrainian SSR—the second largest nationality after the Russian in the USSR, and historically the most restive and independence-minded of the non-Russian nations.

Finally, and most enduringly, Soviet rule depends on militarism. Despite the degeneration of Soviet prestige worldwide, "By the 1980s," Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote recently in *Encounter*, "Soviet power had acquired, for the first time, genuine global reach, compensating thus for lack of systemic appeal." The USSR today, in Brzezinski's words, is a "one-dimensional" military power. And therein lies the danger of its disruptive role in the world.

Internally, the USSR's militarism and expansionism are a source of prestige and popular support. Indeed, as the Soviet economy has stagnated, it is precisely in the sphere of foreign affairs that the Kremlin has seen possibilities for successful initiatives. And inasmuch as Soviet foreign policy is based on the projection of military power, we have been witness to the growth of the military's influence in government.

Today's triad of Soviet political imperatives has echoes that extend far into Russian history. The principles of Party primacy, militarism, and Russification have clear antecedents in Czar Nicholas I's doctrine of "Official Nationality," whose three parallel cornerstones were Orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality. Formally proclaimed by Count Sergei Uvarov in 1833, these principles constitute a recurrent theme

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in the history of Russian power, whether in its Czarist or Soviet variant.

And as exiled Soviet dissident Boris Shragin reminds us in *The Challenge of the Spirit* (1978), his excellent study of the continuities in Russian nationalism: "For centuries, the government's main function was war: all its strength and resources were spent first in warding off surrounding enemies and later in territorial expansion. Little was spent for administration, which was always a weak point of the Russian system." In other words, Russia and its successor state, the USSR, have been engaged in a "centuries-long arms race."

In view of these constants, the three recent studies of Andropov should therefore be judged as much for their insights into the nature of the Soviet

system as for their insights into Andropov. For this reason, Beichman and Bernstam's clear understanding of the nature of Soviet totalitarianism makes their book exceedingly valuable. More uneven is the Solovyov-Klepikova volume which is most useful for illuminating the Russian nationalist dimension of Soviet rule. And Zhores Medvedev's study, despite its leftish, unilateralist stance, provides an expert account of personal rivalries in Soviet ruling circles while emphasizing the sources of the changing *équipe's* fundamental conservatism.

In different ways, these books avoid the pitfalls into which many leading U.S. Sovietologists have fallen in recent years. Indeed, it is a most interesting phenomenon—in this day of sociologically grounded political analysis—to witness leading analysts, whose work is wedded to the

paradigms of class interests, interest group politics, cultural traditions, historical continuities, and the like, abandoning many of these fundamental factors whenever the USSR faces the possibility of a succession crisis. It seems that at such moments all the lessons of Weber or Marx are conveniently forgotten and Freud (personality) comes to the fore. The attempts to paint Andropov as a liberal-minded reformer were wrong not only because they failed to correspond to his record in the Party-state apparatus; they were wrong because in a state such as the USSR there is no possibility for a reformer to emerge, barring some major, palpable crisis. Such a crisis erupted in the aftermath of Stalin's death, when Party functionaries acted to avert another dark age of terror. Since the Khrushchev years there had been continuity and consensus within

Soviet ruling circles. Those few leaders who have strayed from the pillars of Party primacy, Russification, or militarism have been demoted or purged. Andropov may die before this reaches you, yet the continuities in Soviet rule and the imperatives of Soviet power will remain unchanged. The only mystery is who will succeed him, and on this Beichman and Bernstam leave us with an intriguing parting thought:

If the KGB is not enough, then the military will have to step in. Just as it was a Polish general, Jaruzelski, who saved the Communist Party in his country, so could it be a Soviet marshal with a baton in his knapsack who could represent the "Bonapartist" solution to the Soviet crisis.

For Lenin, imperialism represented the highest stage of capitalism. We can perhaps paraphrase Lenin and say that military governance may one day be the highest stage of Communism—and its last. □

THE TALKIES



SILKWOOD VAGUE

by Martha Bayles

At the very least, the original producers of *Silkwood* deserve credit for sheer perseverance. Larry Cano and Buzz Hirsch were film students at UCLA when they first read about Karen Silkwood, a worker in an Oklahoma plutonium recycling plant who became a union activist concerned with safety issues. In the course of her efforts to gather evidence against Kerr-McGee Corporation, Silkwood was badly contaminated, then killed in an auto accident while driving to meet a reporter from the *New York Times*.

The year was 1974, when, as Cano and Hirsch put it, "No one had ever done a film about radiation leaks in a factory." Any hope of a scoop, however, was thwarted when the neophyte producers had to spend two years acquiring the rights to Silkwood's story; three years locating and interviewing her friends and co-workers; several months litigating with Kerr-McGee (who in 1977 subpoenaed the filmmakers' accumulated materials); and finally the past six years navigating the ups and downs of Hollywood. It all adds up to almost a

decade—during which there have been endless court cases, books and plays, *The China Syndrome* starring Jane Fonda, *Three Mile Island* starring Jimmy Carter, and a burgeoning antinuclear movement which has all but stopped the industry in its tracks.

So who wants to hear about Karen Silkwood now? Meryl Streep, for one. And her agent, Sam Cohen, who is responsible for drawing in such luminaries as director Mike Nichols, writer Nora Ephron, and co-star Cher. Evidently all these people, and a great many critics, not to mention moviegoers, feel that the story is worth retelling.

To a certain extent, they are right. It is always worthwhile re-creating the background of a news story, so that we may see what sort of people it's about. The film shows Silkwood's milieu to be vaguely countercultural, with alienated and unattached young working people drifting in and out of jobs, commitments, relationships. I have a little trouble with Cher's lesbian lover, a wisecracking blonde who works as a beautician in a funeral home—such sitcom cuteness reminds me too vividly that the producer is ABC. But otherwise the characters' sixties-style aliena-

tion seems quite believable, if only as a thin cover for their native cussedness, orneriness, and anarchic individualism. In other words, the wall hanging may come from India, but the planks underneath are pure Oklahoma.

This authenticity has a lot to do with Streep. Or rather, with Streep as directed by Nichols, who has the good sense not to fawn over her the way Alan Pakula did in *Sophie's Choice*. Here she is encouraged to be scuzzy, skinny, bitchy, and sly—all of which she does extremely well. And at the other end of the scale, she has moments of great beauty, sweetness, and something rarely seen on the screen nowadays: merriment. How many contemporary actresses, when called upon to display genuine humor and high spirits, can produce more than a plaque-free smile?

Yet before the movie has gotten very far, we realize that this nuanced performance (and that of Kurt Russell as Silkwood's boyfriend) is not going to lead anywhere. The highly textured acting arouses our curiosity, but does not satisfy it with any sort of revelation about Silkwood's reasons for making the choices she did. This might

be all right if the plot held some surprises, but after all, we already know what is going to happen. By the end of the film I began almost to resent Streep's intriguing performance, seeing it as a will-o'-the-wisp intended to lure the audience onward in the absence of any other real suspense. Silkwood's car goes off the road, and we wonder about the circumstances: Was she forced off, or did she simply pass out from all the drugs she had been taking? The film doesn't commit itself to either explanation. But neither does it offer any real insight into her deeper values and motivation, which to me is a more serious kind of waffling.

Of course, filmmakers who must spend two years negotiating with the estate of a real person are not apt to come up with boldly imaginative statements about her character—even if such statements were in cinematic fashion, which they aren't. More likely the person will be portrayed in a superficially flattering light, in a script that sticks to the agreed-upon facts while cloaking the disputed ones in silence or ambiguity. It's a safe course,

Martha Bayles is film critic for *The American Spectator*.

but too predictable to provide the stuff of drama.

It's surprising to me that so many critics, columnists, and letter writers have accused this movie of misrepresenting the actual evidence for the sake of a vivid story. I rather think that *Silkwood* does the opposite: It handles the crucial facts so ambiguously, it fails to establish the story's dramatic core. How can we get involved when we don't know for sure who did what, and when our minds are distracted by the clever ways the film tries to insinuate guilt without actually pointing the finger?

Like television network news observing the Fairness Doctrine, *Silkwood* presents the claims of both sides while being formally careful not to conclude anything. As Edward Jay Epstein has pointed out, the aim of the Fairness Doctrine is not to arrive at the

truth, but to achieve "balance." Taken one at a time, TV news reports appear fair because they are balanced in this way. Bias only emerges when we look at the subjects that are selected for coverage. I think this is one reason why defenders of the nuclear industry take exception to *Silkwood*: However technically evenhanded the presentation, the story the film chooses to portray is not representative.

This is not to say that the movie doesn't hint in various ways that Silkwood was right. Most salient is her discovery that one of her superiors is retouching photographs of the plant's product: fuel rods for a breeder reactor in the state of Washington. The fellow claims that he is only blacking out dust spots, but Silkwood reports to the head of her national union that the company is covering up defects. Upon hearing this, the union honcho

whispers that a single defect could lead to a chain reaction that would "wipe out millions of people, maybe even the whole state."

Yet right afterward, the film suggests another explanation for this alarmist remark. The national leadership's concern about safety issues at Kerr-McGee declines as soon as the union wins a recertification election in Silkwood's local. So it's quite possible the honcho was merely playing on Silkwood's fears to make sure she helped get out the vote. This possibility is emotionally reinforced when the honcho's young lawyer starts a love affair with Silkwood, only to drop it as quickly as his boss drops his interest in defective fuel rods, once the election has been won.

Thus the film does its balancing act pretty well. Conflicting versions of events are given about equal time, with neither receiving independent corroboration. The crucial decisions that constitute the action of the story are not made in our purview; we see only the consequences, as when Silkwood sets off the blaring contamination alarms. We feel sorry for her during the brutal scrubdown which leaves her skin raw, and the gutting and stripping of her home. Yet the question of who did it stays unanswered. The plant manager accuses her, while she cannot decide who to accuse—the company, the union, or a fellow worker worried about losing his job. The courts haven't ruled on this one yet, and neither does the film.

The trouble is, allegation-juggling doesn't make for very compelling drama. We know that Silkwood's personal life was unstable; that she left her common-law husband and three children in Texas for the presumably greener pastures of Oklahoma, and had a reputation for drinking, popping pills, and sleeping around. Was she mentally and emotionally capable of assessing the dangers at Kerr-McGee? Or did she succumb to paranoia, exaggerating an already bad situation in order to get attention and act out her antisocial impulses? Because the film makes no effort to clarify these matters, we cannot really empathize, much less make a judgment about this particular woman's strengths and weaknesses.

Likewise Kerr-McGee. Aside from having very lax safety standards for its employees, the company is not shown to be engaged in any explicit wrongdoing. The plant manager is clearly disliked by the workers, but nowhere do we see him plotting, J.R. Ewing style, to block the union or to injure Silkwood. There is only the self-interest of the corporation, expressed

by the local union rep, who says of an early incident in which Silkwood gets blamed for a leak, "What can they do? They can't blame themselves, so they have to blame somebody." But does self-interest automatically lead to murder?

I'm afraid we are now at the heart of the real drama enacted by this film, which is not the particular one transpiring between an unhappy woman and a badly run facility. By obscuring motivation on the part of Silkwood, and action on the part of Kerr-McGee, the film removes the drama from the universe where individuals and corporations may choose between right and wrong. If Silkwood was deliberately contaminated or murdered, it was not, according to this film, a crime in the ordinary sense of the word. Rather it was a kind of fate, the inevitable outcome of any situation in which a large organization possesses power, self-interest, and nuclear technology. Note the generalized terms in which Cano and Hirsch describe their original inspiration: "Back in 1974 we didn't know anything about nuclear power. We just knew it was the stuff you made bombs out of. It opened our eyes and made us determined to tell the story of one woman waging a war against the nuclear industry."

It comes as no surprise, I'm sure, that "nuclear power," i.e., "the stuff you made bombs out of," is the villain instead of Kerr-McGee. The filmmakers may have been keeping an eye out for the corporation's lawyers, but that is not the most important reason why their film omits specific blame. Like the makers of *The Day After*, ABC's TV movie about nuclear war, the people who devised *Silkwood* don't consider specific blame to be relevant. To show a particular bad guy would be to personalize the evil, and suggest that human choice is a contributing factor. That's not the message of these films.

The Day After tells the story of World War III without bothering to depict the events that lead up to it. The makers of *Silkwood* would probably concur with ABC-TV's claim that this was the best way to deal with the subject, by being "apolitical." Which amounts to being amoral as well. By shunting aside the entire question of what decisions were actually made, both films reveal their true assumptions about the subject: that it doesn't matter how responsibly or prudently we employ nuclear technology, because nuclear technology is the Devil. The real message of *Silkwood* is that by splitting the atom, we forfeit both our moral judgment and our free will. There is no right action, once we have signed our names in blood. □

SURVEY

Autumn – Winter Double Issue (118/119) 1983

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BOOK REVIEWS

Irving Kristol, the graying guru of neoconservatives, never set foot in Washington until the late 1950s, after he had co-founded *Encounter* magazine with Stephen Spender. Reading his book of essays, *Reflections of a Neoconservative*, makes it clear that Mr. Kristol neither missed nor much liked the pre-Reagan carryings on in our nation's capital. He even finds distasteful some of the action under the current Administration.

Nonetheless, by 1981 Mr. Kristol understood, far better than most Democrats and (I like to hope) most Americans, what Ronald Reagan was up to with his massive tax cuts. In Kristol's view, the new President was determined to "put the welfare state in a moderately tight straitjacket for the rest of the decade at least." He applauds the President for "being bold enough to create a conservative deficit (one resulting from tax cuts) as a counterweight to liberal deficits (resulting from increased government expenditures)." To Mr. Kristol, Mr. Reagan is "just about the only conservative in his administration who appreciates the full ideological significance of his economic policy."

Here, I think Kristol has scored a top-of-the-scale 10 in political perspicacity. On the other hand, too many Democrats have scored three or less for their inability to perceive Reagan's true intentions in time to thwart them.

Kristol claps his hands for Reagan's domestic ideological coup in the same essay that condemns the President's foreign policy as soft:

What single bold action has this administration taken in foreign affairs? None. What single bold ideological affirmation has this administration uttered in foreign affairs? President Reagan occasionally says something that approximates such an affirmation, but the State Department quickly blankets it with an obfuscatory "explanation." Diplomacy becomes a substitute for, rather than a tool of, foreign policy.

Therein—as throughout his later essays—Kristol reveals how misleading the title of his book is. For there is nothing "neo" about him. These

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REFLECTIONS OF A NEOCONSERVATIVE: LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD

Irving Kristol/Basic Books/\$19.95

Joseph A. Califano, Jr.

essays are the reflections of a full-blooded conservative. Fortunately for Mr. Kristol, the Reagan Administration has so defanged the Federal Trade Commission that there is little, if any, likelihood it will enforce laws against false advertising, much less invoke the Truth-in-Packaging Act of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society.

Kristol may lack the lifelong card-carrying status of a Richard Viguerie. He is mercifully free of the political buffoonery of Howard Phillips. And he does not subscribe to the ridiculous litmus tests of Jerry Falwell and the Moral Majority. But with this book, Irving Kristol puts forth a thesis that entitles him to a doctorate in conservative letters, no "neo" about it.

Kristol's book is extraordinarily well written—a series of sprightly, provocative essays that also display a remarkable versatility of mind and matter. The Cold War, American

higher education, obscenity, foreign policy, economics, politics, art, Judaism, psychoanalysis, Christianity, NATO, Einstein, and socialism are just some of the topics covered. Most of the essays have such pace that, once begun, it's hard to put them down.

The tone of *Reflections* is relentlessly that of the convert who has become purer than the lifelong ideologue, like the born-again Christian who totally eschews things material, or the newly convinced vegetarian who considers it a moral outrage to kill cattle or chickens. Kristol is purer than Reagan, more economically pristine than Martin Feldstein.

Yet, taken with a few grains of salt, there is much for liberals to learn about their own excesses and hypocrisies from Kristol's thirty-year intellectual tour. One only wishes the author had subjected his new-found conservative faith to the same pragmatic harpoons that he so brilliantly directs at the intellectual and

political foibles of American liberals.

Item: In his 1977 essay, "Memoirs of a Trotskyist," Kristol contrasts the radicalism of the thirties, "decidedly an adult movement" in which young people participated, with the radicalism of the sixties, a childish, generational movement. The sixties were "a bewildering and self-destructive tantrum," because we adults failed to transmit adult values to our offspring. Kristol's characterization of this tumultuous period is accurate enough. But he neglects to note that the kids of the sixties got broad-based support that hardcore radicals of the thirties never could muster. Most Americans believed that the draft was forcing millions of young men to risk their lives in a war that had a seemingly insatiable appetite for American blood and gave no adequate return on the investment of our national honor and power.

Item: In his essay on "Pornography, Obscenity and the Case for Censorship," Kristol rightly notes that in order to propound seriously that "no one was ever corrupted by a book, you almost have to believe that no one was ever improved by a book (or a play, or a movie)." With characteristic wit, he notes that "no one, not even a university professor, really believes that." Every civilized society has put some limits on public amusements. I find it remarkable that many of the same liberals who so fervently seek to ban boxing as a public sporting event should place no limit on the human degradation to which they would permit men and women to sink in X-rated films and sex-oriented nightclubs.

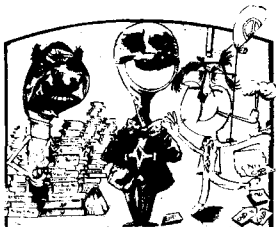
Item: In the essay "Urban Civilization and Its Discontents," Kristol punches down the special problems, concentrated poverty, and physical deterioration of large urban centers. Rather, he almost one-dimensionally attributes the decline of the American city to the establishment in America of a moral code that asks not why, but "why not?" For Kristol, it is a "startling absence of values" that is responsible for the urban crisis of our democratic urban nation.

Again and again, Kristol punches holes in Marxist economic and historical theory. He sharply draws the lines between socialist theory and the reality of what's happening in most socialist countries in the world. In economics, Kristol puts all his faith in the capitalist system. I heartily agree.



REPRINTS

It would be hard to find three subjects more hotly debated today than education, environmentalism, and the growing nuclear freeze movement. Each of these topics merited in-depth coverage in past issues of *The American Spectator*, and now, due to popular demand, are available in reprint form. Order your copies today to provide material for your own debates, or to distribute to educators, businessmen, and students.



The Counterfeit Peacemakers: Atomic Freeze by Rael Jean Isaac and Erich Isaac. This 12-page investigative report appeared in the June 1982 issue and documents Soviet involvement in the nuclear freeze movement. The article was the subject of a White House press conference, as well as numerous national newspaper articles and television shows.



Marva Collins and American Public Education by Rita Kramer. Mrs. Kramer reports on how Marva Collins, whose success in teaching ghetto children how to read and write earned her the wrath of the NEA, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the assorted fat cats of our bloated educational bureaucracy. First run in the April 1983 issue, it is must reading for teachers, principals, administrators, or just parents concerned about the education their children are receiving.



Modern Man and the Obsession by Robert Nisbet. In this reprint of his May 1983 feature article, Nisbet argues that the environmental movement has lost all perspective and taken on the aura and enthusiasm of a religion. No other work has so cogently documented the anti-capitalist mentality and upper-class fanaticism behind this the Age of Environmentalism.

Sanctifying Revolution: Protestantism's New Social Gospel by Rael Jean Isaac and Erich Isaac. Though recently the subject of a "60 Minutes" report, the Isaac's research into the Marxist links behind various church movements first made headlines when it appeared in the May 1981 issue of *The American Spectator*. In the wake of the WCC's recent criticism of Afghan freedom fighters, the Isaacs' documentation of how Church money is being spent in various countries is now more important than ever.



Sideswipe: Kissinger, Shawcross, and the Responsibility for Cambodia by Peter Rodman with rebuttal by William Shawcross. This reprint features the complete and lively exchange between Rodman and Shawcross regarding the alleged United States responsibility for the Cambodian holocaust. These articles appeared in the March and July 1981 issues.

Please rush me the following reprints:

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Capitalism is the best economic system the world has ever known. But I deplore Kristol's reluctance (at least in this collection) to accept the need for government to act as a redistributor of wealth to those who are unable, either temporarily or permanently, to fend for themselves.

Contrary to conservative myth, the Great Society was not a set of programs designed to pour money into the hands of the lazy poor so they could atrophy, smoking cigarettes, drinking beer, and sending the bill to the American taxpayer.

The Great Society was first and foremost a program of economic policy that gave this country some of the most prosperous times in its two-hundred-year history. The real economic growth of the middle sixties took care of the overwhelming majority of the American people without any government help.

If the majority of Americans are to reap the fruits of a capitalist society with a clear conscience, then they must recognize that even the finest economic policy cannot, without government intervention, deal with two kinds of people: those who are literally unable to care for themselves, and those who need some help, above and beyond what the market place provides, to share in the general economic well-being.

In the first group I would include the aged who need Social Security or other support, the permanently disabled who are so physically or mentally ill that they cannot work, and the millions of little children born into our society of parents who either neglect, abuse, or ignore them, and who certainly do not fulfill their obligation to support them.

In the second group, I would put the temporarily unemployed, the people who need health care to repair their minds or bodies in order to work again but who cannot afford that health care, and those who need an education or training to master technical skills. By and large, these are people who need the kinds of things the fortunate among us receive from our parents or other loving relatives.

Government can and should help these two groups, but one finds precious little support for that humane role in Kristol's neoconservatism.

One of Kristol's devils, clearly, is interventionist government—of Franklin Roosevelt, and particularly of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. This is one devil Kristol will not give his due.

But the currently fashionable world of neoconservatism, even as brilliantly articulated by Mr. Kristol, cannot obscure the reality of what the Great Society achieved. In 1960, 22 percent

of the American people lived below the official poverty level. When Lyndon Johnson left office in 1969, that percentage had dropped to 13 percent. Despite the flat economy of the 1970s, the official poverty level did not rise. Indeed, by 1979 it had gone down to 12 percent. But if we count (as David Stockman does when it supports his budget-cutting points) the income effects of the Great Society service programs, such as those for health care, job training, aid to education, and rehabilitation for the handicapped, by the mid-1970s the poverty rate had been reduced to six percent.

What has Reagan's economic and domestic policy achieved? By 1982, the poverty rate had skyrocketed to 15 percent, the highest in seventeen years with 34 million Americans officially considered poor. These numbers come from the same Administration that pays Ed Meese to make hungry children disappear.

Though Mr. Kristol has high marks for President Reagan's shrewd economic policy and conservative deficits, his inability to see much good in governments past allows him to miss another point I think Reagan understands far better than most Republicans and Democrats. The President's ability to drive down inflation with a sledgehammer was made possible by the cushions Lyndon Johnson's Great Society provided: food stamps, unemployment compensation (which Reagan came to like so much as President that he kept recommending 13-week benefit extensions), Medicaid and Medicare, community health centers, work training, and a host of other programs. Ronald Reagan has taught us that we can rapidly wring inflation out of the economy because the remnants of a compassionate, interventionist government are there not only to keep the mobs off the streets, but to keep most families together and a good many adequately (if not well) fed.

When all is said and done, what do I think of Kristol's book? If you like *The American Spectator*, you'll love Irving Kristol. If you are a committed liberal, you'll get your dander up as you go through its pages. But there's a lot to learn in the way he pointedly—but always good-naturedly—reminds you of your haunting mistakes and lingering hypocrisies. If you appreciate good writing about the serious business of making America work better, reorient its values, and get moving again, read it. You'll enjoy.

And you'll discover that there's nothing neo about Mrs. Kristol's son, Irving. □

THE TROUBLED CRUSADE:
AMERICAN EDUCATION 1945-1980
Diane Ravitch/Basic Books/\$19.95

John R. Turner

Dealing with a subject as diverse as American schooling over a 35-year period requires thematic discipline. The strength of Diane Ravitch's new book, *The Troubled Crusade*, is its close adherence to the argument that public demands for equality brought state action to bear on the schools in a way never before experienced in our history. The corresponding weakness is an absence of information about what actually went on in the classroom.

Through eight dense chapters Mrs. Ravitch amply documents the governmental ingestion of the schools. A single fact alone, offered in her final pages, could well serve as a symbol for her entire story: In 1965 there were 92 federal regulations affecting education; by 1977 the number had grown to almost a thousand.

The cost of assuring educational access to everyone—aside from billions of dollars—has been intense confusion about what education is supposed to be. As Mrs. Ravitch concludes: "Lost in the new order of things was any conception of the common interest, the idea that made common schooling possible."

The author's attitude toward these developments is not as decided as the foregoing statement might suggest. Though she clearly regrets the bureaucratic invasion, and the consequent loss of coherence, she is also strongly impressed by the sheer physical growth of education. The number of buildings built, the number of teachers trained, the number of graduates certified, and the number of dollars spent since 1945 are astounding. The number of people graduating from college and going on to advanced education now exceeds the wildest predictions of 35 years ago. If one assumes, with Mrs. Ravitch, that all this represents learning, there can be no question that the schools now are better than they were at the end of the Second World War.

John R. Turner is Director of Continuing Education at St. Mary's College of Maryland and author of the column "An Idea of Freedom."

The problem with any assumption about a subject as vast as the schools of an entire nation is that it is inevitably more a product of political and historiographical stance than it is of evidence. One can find pretty much what he looks for.

Diane Ravitch is what I would call a conservative liberal—as contrasted with the progressive liberal to one side of her and the liberal conservative to the other. Her heart is with government reform, but her head tells her that the government often fouls up what it touches, and that it is particularly inept in dealing with the subtleties of education. She knows also that the government's weakness in the face of pressure groups means that political initiatives can be ruinous to genuine learning.

For these reasons, she is suspicious of sweeping governmental programs, preferring instead processes with limited and specific goals. Nor does she have much patience with those who argue that piecemeal reform is little more than patching holes in a rotten educational fabric.

Her account of the curriculum revision movement, which rose up in the anxiety following Sputnik, provides a clear example of how she thinks educational change occurs. Between 1956 and 1975, the National Science Foundation funded 53 projects designed to spruce up the teaching of mathematics and science by weaning teachers from their dependence on textbooks and memorization exercises. By the mid-seventies these efforts were generally seen as failures by the educational community. A great deal of money had been spent and ambitious claims had been made. Yet, according to the common view, not much had happened. Science and mathematics were taught pretty much as they had been before.

Not so, says Mrs. Ravitch. Though the schools had not been transformed, some changes had occurred. Particularly in the natural sciences, the NSF curricula had found wide acceptance, and were being used in 60 percent of the nation's school districts. Therefore, the author asserts, the NSF "can be judged to have achieved a

significant influence through its relatively small investment."

Well, maybe. It's hard to know what "significant" means in this case. That a school district used one of the curricula doesn't tell us how many students were affected. And certainly, it doesn't tell us what the effect was. The flaw in Mrs. Ravitch's approach to educational history is that it seldom pushes through to results that count. A history of schooling that says virtually nothing about what actually took place in the minds of students

leaves something to be desired.

She might well respond that it's impossible to know what happened in students' minds. And if one adheres to her view of valid evidence, she's right. She is a social scientific historian and places her faith in data, statistics, and "studies" based on them. She exhibits no inclination toward individual perception and so makes scarcely any use of anecdotal evidence. Consequently, not only does her book seldom penetrate to the heart of her subject, it also makes for fairly dry

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reading except in those sections where she has a political story to tell. In that case she can be an interesting writer.

Her chapter entitled "From Berkeley to Kent State," for example, which recounts the campus uprisings of the sixties and seventies, is one of the more engaging sections of the book because it deals with specific acts, and because it allows the author to lay aside the mantle of historical objectivity, rise out of the mushy conclusions dictated by educational data, and say what she thinks.

In her analysis of upheavals at the University of California, Columbia, San Francisco State, Cornell, and Yale, she has little good to say about the student radicals, quoting with approval Eugene Genovese's designation of them as "pseudo-revolutionary middle class totalitarians." Yet her special scorn is reserved for weak-kneed faculty members and bumbling administrators who gave the agitators the ammunition they needed to win temporary support from student majorities who did not really agree with the radical aims. Her summary of this much reported segment of American educational history is the most sensible short account I have seen.

Just about as good is her chapter on the rise and fall of progressive education, which I suspect will receive more attention than all other parts of the book put together. In treading on religious ground she has to expect to draw the lightning.

Though Mrs. Ravitch gives the early progressive thinkers, and especially John Dewey, credit for urging a needed liberalization of teaching methods, she sees that the major role of progressive thought was to serve as the intellectual vehicle for the bureaucratization of the schools. The progressives claimed to have made a science of pedagogy, and they were successful in selling that idea to the nation. Consequently, long after their specific prescriptions had been set aside, the organizations they created continued to dominate the schools.

If Americans ever get up enough gumption to take back control of educational policy, and reintroduce the diversity that ought to characterize the schools of a free nation, it will be in part because they have understood the process by which the educational professoriate projected itself into power. And historians like Mrs. Ravitch who lifted the veil from the educational sanctum sanctorum will have made an important contribution. □

BERNARD BARUCH: THE ADVENTURES OF A WALL STREET LEGEND

James Grant/Simon and Schuster/\$19.95

Edwin M. Yoder, Jr.

The problem with legends in their own time is that they are sometimes hard reading, and none was harder than Bernard M. Baruch. Everyone of a certain age remembers him, this adviser to Presidents, very rich (though not, it turns out, as rich as people often thought), a man who preferred a sunny bench in Lafayette Park to the corridors of power.

Nearly twenty years after his death at 95 in 1965, Baruch continues to exhibit the strange opacity of those who are, as someone has wickedly put it, "famous for being famous." Not that fame was the only source of his fame. But much of him was and remains hidden, like those old-fashioned high top Sears Roebuck shoes that a photographer chanced to see Baruch

Edwin M. Yoder, Jr. is a columnist for the Washington Post and other newspapers.

wearing one day while sitting cross-legged in the park.

The Baruch legend is grounded in the tribute Americans usually pay to men of, or reputed to have, financial genius. Baruch had it. James Grant, a lively financial journalist, had the excellent idea of using Baruch's Wall Street adventures as a sort of aperture to the inner man. Grant's approach is sound, so far as it goes. But his reach is a bit limited since a genius for making money, like artier forms of genius, is often a matter not of systematic calculation but of the exercise of elusive gifts of intuition. Baruch knew this. Years after leaving the stock exchange, he would shrewdly say that the best book on the psychology of the market was an obscure historical tome, Mackay's *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*.

Bernard Baruch came out of Reconstruction South Carolina, the

son of a Camden doctor of some distinction who in his time had ridden with the Klan and would later become an ardent apostle of public baths. The son, though transported to New York in 1881 as a lad, would always regard himself as a South Carolinian, never (according to Grant) lose his drawl, and much of the year keep house at his splendid Hobcaw barony in the Low Country. But it was in New York that he went to City College, then took up the pursuit of fortune on Wall Street.

His destiny as a financier had, it seems, been certified early and strangely. His mother took him to a New York phrenologist who, after fingering Baruch's glabella, declared: "... My advice to you is to take him where they are doing big things—finance or politics."

His first killing on Wall Street, the unregulated *fin-de-siècle* Wall Street, was to parlay \$300 into \$60,000 in sugar speculation. The striking point was not the deal itself; it was the fact that Baruch, always a man of extraordinary generosity, gave almost all his gains away, to father and friends. He would go on to make a great deal of money in mining and railroad stocks, losing some in the process and giving much away; but he got no closer to his heart's ambition of being a railroad tycoon than the board of the B & O.

Baruch, it seems, was never as rich as people thought. At its height, according to Grant's calculation, his worth was about \$25 million (pre-inflation), which was somewhat reduced by the great crash of 1929, when he exercised his gift for selling short. (In old age, he was heard to say wistfully that, had he wished, he could have been "really rich.")

Having made his fortune early, he sold his seat on the New York Stock Exchange in 1917 and headed for Washington to fulfill the phrenologist's second augury—as a wartime administrator and committeeman specializing in industrial mobilization. There, again, the record is somewhat murky. Just what his contribution to the war effort was, beyond joining the cult of "preparedness," is not clear; but it was obviously considerable, and Wilson valued it enough to offer him the Treasury in 1918. He declined, to go to Versailles with the peace delegation. So the Chair of the War Industries Board was to be his highest official perch in government.

Baruch, though in theory a hard-money, free-market man, took an expansive view of wartime government. He was in no sense a *dirigeiste* in political economy. But in emergencies he tended to make a virtue of necessity, especially what strong Presidents

viewed as necessity. In quiet moments he deplored in principle what he had applauded in practice. Indeed Baruch was, as Grant puts it, "the despair of political taxonomists." He was a man of the most episodic, often contradictory views. The contradiction is classically summed up in one of his celebrated bromides: "The American people will take care of themselves if told what to do and why."

At Versailles he had met John Maynard Keynes and disliked him—not for his economic views but for his scalding sketch of Wilson as a canting Presbyterian in *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*. Baruch was too even-tempered, genial, and cautious to quarrel over mere policies. In New Deal days he supported the abrogation of the "gold clause" contracts, an inflationary move condemned by many

bondholders. And as a sometime ardent Prohibitionist in the mid-1920s, Baruch nonetheless kept a cellar that included, among other holdings, 22 cases of Clos du Cardinal, 34 of vermouth, 51 of Gordon's gin, 45 of Scotch, and 12 of champagne. He was a lifelong Democrat who gave lavishly to the party (almost \$50,000 to the two Wilson campaigns, for instance) but he bolted to Eisenhower in 1952. →

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Baruch had many devoted friends, including journalists like Herbert Bayard Swope of the *New York World* (who wrote or touched up his speeches) and Arthur Krock, and General Pershing, whose financial affairs he handled from 1923 on. Every so often he publicly reiterated his standard advice: To get on, Americans must "work and save." He pontificated in that sense to Arthur Krock once, in opulent surroundings in Paris, while having a manicure. He was teased about it in Hobcaw for years. Henry Ford's silly, anti-Semitic *Dearborn Independent* condemned him as the "proconsul of Judah in America." When reporters asked about the

charges, Baruch, in one of his wittier moments, responded: "Now, boys, you wouldn't expect me to deny them, would you?"

Such are the salient features of the financial and public career of Bernard M. Baruch, man and "Wall Street legend." Mr. Grant chronicles them with a merry heart and a light touch, and is especially enlightening on the intricacies of stock speculation. But somehow the whole that might spring from this lively mosaic of bits and pieces never quite comes into focus. Baruch cultivated an aura of blandness—"I am never quoted directly," he scolded once to a *New Yorker* writer who had quoted an uncharacteristically sharp remark about someone. The blandness may or may not have been belied in private.

Was there more to the legend than was seen, tucked away from sight like his sensible Sears Roebuck shoes? Perhaps. But until we find the secret diary, or the set of indiscreet letters, all we have is the decorous, honorable record which Mr. Grant here explores so entertainingly. □

THE ANATOMY LESSON

Philip Roth/Farrar, Straus and Giroux/\$14.95

George Sim Johnston

It has become the fashion among American novelists to envy their brethren in Eastern Europe. Totalitarian regimes, so goes the argument, give the novelist what he wants—a milieu where things really matter. Their citizenry routinely faces the kind of moral dilemmas which are the stuff of good fiction and which the poor American novelist, dealing with a permissive democracy, cannot introduce into his work with a straight face. The rulers of these regimes, moreover, pay close attention to what writers have to say, and the writer, passing around his samizdat manuscripts in dimly lit cells while the snarling ideological watchdogs patrol outside, has the ticklish feeling that he is a part of History. Poor Doctorow and Coover and Piercy and Mailer! They keep flailing away at America in book after book, and nobody, apart from those who already share their

George Sim Johnston is a writer living in New York.

animosities, seems to notice. How much better they would feel knowing that the jackboots from State Security were on their way.

Tom Wolfe has diagnosed the psychological basis of these grievances, and there is no need to dwell on the interior need of certain American intellectuals to feel persecuted. But the complaints themselves raise an intriguing question. Is it true that writers who live under repressive regimes, whether of the Right or the Left, have larger themes at their disposal than writers who live in democracies where, as the novelist here under consideration has put it, "everything goes and nothing matters"? One's first thought is to go back to an author like Jane Austen, who apparently spent more time worrying about knitting patterns and Hampshire balls than about politics. There is more on the nature and destiny of Western man in *Mansfield Park* than in any work yet to come out of a modern police state. One might argue, looking at her and

James and Balzac, that moral sensitivity, not to mention sheer craftsmanship, is more important than a writer's political context.

But the issue is somewhat more complicated. The people in Jane Austen's world moved in a highly pressurized moral and social atmosphere. Their actions had significance because of the resistance of this atmosphere. How many of the dilemmas portrayed in nineteenth-century fiction would make the slightest sense if transported, say, to the upper west side of Manhattan today? Madame Bovary could accommodate her adulteries in an Open Marriage or, at worst, she and Charles could attend a Creative Divorce workshop at the New School. Père Goriot on Percodan or Valium ceases to be a plot catalyst. A social order which seems to have abandoned most rules is, indeed, a more difficult number for a novelist. In order to find the tension which makes for a good story, he has to dig under the lax surface of a democratic society into business offices or artists' lofts or whatever, where he'll find plenty of what he wants. Unfortunately, most novelists these days seem too lazy to do this. They stick to their own turf, which is the academy or a street somewhere in suburbia, and when these exhaust their powers of observation, there is always the final subject, their own free-floating egos. No wonder some of them yearn for the external stimuli provided by a totalitarian regime.

If P.E.N. ever sponsors an airlift to Rumania for American novelists, Philip Roth will be my candidate for the first shuttle. Roth has shown he has the stuff of a good novelist. He once had a good eye for social detail, he still has an ear for vernacular, and he can be funny. His last four novels, however, have made scant use of these gifts because their true subject is the narcissistic literary ego. Now, there is nothing wrong with making a writer or artist the hero of a novel. Mann and Proust did, and produced great works. But their novels deal with extra-literary themes and social milieus, and these provide a mediating distance through which the reader approaches the self-absorbed artist. Even Updike, in his Bech books, works up an ironic distance which allows him to bring off some passing literary satire. Roth, however, begins and ends with the self-absorbed artist, whose gangrenous ego is both theme and milieu.

Nathan Zuckerman, novelist hero of the trilogy of which *The Anatomy Lesson* is, mercifully, the conclusion, is interested only in his own needs and feelings. "Had he kept a pain diary,

the only entry would have been one word: Myself." Like numerous other characters in contemporary American fiction (and, one is tempted to say, like their creators), Nathan tries to achieve self-knowledge in exactly the way that William James said is impossible: not by observing himself indirectly through action, but by sitting still and sending his thoughts like a diving bell down into the murky depths of his psyche in order to find his Real Self. Introspection of this sort makes bad psychotherapy and worse fiction.

The novel opens with Zuckerman stretched supine on a playmat in his study, his head supported by *Roget's Thesaurus*, watching Watergate on television through a pair of prism glasses that enable him to see at right angles. "He almost felt for Nixon, the only other American he saw daily who seemed to be in as much trouble as he was." Naturally, he has writer's block. He also has a mysterious ailment which causes intolerable pain unless he remains flat on his back. Various women come to succor him. His favorite playmate, Jenny, is one of those Perfect Women who keep showing up in Roth's fiction, the intriguing, literate, unassuming, mothering sexual acrobat who is ultimately too demanding for Roth's narcissistic literateurs. She reads to him each day from *The Magic Mountain*. "It had seemed the appropriate great tome for the occasion, but strapped inert upon his narrow bed, Zuckerman grew increasingly irritated by Hans Castrop and the dynamic opportunities for growth provided him by TB." With such sentences does Roth try to give the impression that he is working a sidestreet of a ritzy literary neighborhood.

In Mann's novel, however, the whole sick crew is preoccupied with the central issues of Western civilization. What is Nathan Zuckerman's main preoccupation when he isn't thinking about his aching back? An unpleasant article written about his work by a highbrow critic named Max Arpel. Roth tells interviewers that his work is not autobiographical, but the article described in the novel bears a curious resemblance to one that Irving Howe wrote about Roth's work some years ago in *Commentary*. In that piece, Howe made the case that Roth is a vulgar, minor satirist who "cannot, or ought not, hold the interest of a reasonably mature reader." Roth seems not to have gotten over it. He pours all sorts of invective on Appel-Howe's head, calling him President of the Rabbinical Society for the Suppression of Laughter in the Interest of Lottier Values, to choose one of the politer (and somewhat accurate) epithets. But writing a novel in which the main objective emotion of the hero is animus

against a book reviewer would seem to prove Howe's point.

Apart from getting even with Max Appel, Zuckerman's major pursuit is getting rid of the mysterious pain. He decides that the way to do this is to shuck the writer's trade and find a profession which would make him focus on something beside himself. "Other people. Somebody should have told me about them long ago," runs the epiphany. There follow a number of discussions between the forty-year old novelist and his friends about the "real world" and what he is going to do in life—the sort you last heard senior year in college. He flies to Chicago to enroll in medical school. There is a funny skit on the airplane where Zuckerman pretends to the staid businessman sitting next to him that he is a pornographer named Max Appel. In Chicago he has a nervous breakdown, bangs himself falling on a tombstone (shades of Henry James's "The Beast in the Jungle") and lands up in the hospital. There, once he recovers some of his health, he makes the rounds with the doctors in intensive care and discovers that cancer, among other maladies, is worse than the pangs of a solipsistic literary conscience. We leave him treasuring the realization that he doesn't have it so bad after all, and there is a hint that he will return

to the typewriter. A cancer ward, it seems, will do as well as the Gulag.

Reviewers often praise Roth's style, and his writing is smooth. He has done the best of any novelist with the mandarin vaudeville style Bellow inaugurated in *Augie March*. But his dialogue, even though it can be amusing, is something of a cheat. His characters don't talk, they sandblast each other with words. What there is of plot never advances unobtrusively through conversation; it lurches from soapbox to soapbox. It is the same trick that most "serious" Broadway dramatists use these days, and it makes the assembly of characters in a room seem arbitrary. The best bits in his last books have been the letters which the characters compose—off-stage, of course. Maybe Roth should try an epistolary novel.

He should also take a cue from his literary alter ego, whose only fun in *The Anatomy Lesson* is when he gets out of his own skin and pretends to be a pornography magnate. It is the only fun the reader has, as well. Now that he is done with Nathan Zuckerman, Roth should leave the exploration of the literary ego to the dozens of novelists currently working the terrain and let his not inconsiderable talents for gags and mimicry feed on more solid fare. □

THE LAST TESTAMENT OF OSCAR WILDE

Peter Ackroyd/Harper & Row/\$12.95

WISE VIRGIN

A.N. Wilson/Viking Press/\$13.95

Roger Lewis

Peter Ackroyd is a master of disguise. But it is not he who dresses up: His talent is to divine the masquerades of other people. He has already essayed Ezra Pound, an author whose endless *Cantos* form a ventriloquial epic. Built from fragments of recollected conversations and snatches of dialogue overheard in history, the *Cantos* "moan round with many voices," like the memories cloaked by the ocean in Tennyson's *Ulysses*.

Ackroyd has also written a book called *Dressing Up*. Ostensibly about transvestism, it charted the couturial aids which help blur sexual distinc-

Roger Lewis is fiction critic for the New Statesman (London).

tions. But looked at with a critical eye, free from moral and social distaste, the concept of a man trying to turn himself into a woman enacts something important. With the looks of a lady and the appendages of the male, the transvestite is a creature closest to androgyne (*andros* male, *gunē* woman, in Greek). If our commentators about myth are to be believed, androgyne is the primal, undivided whole from which the rest of us have sprung.

This combination of masculine and feminine traits is the basis of comic confusion in much of Shakespeare (where girls turn into boys) and is the major convention in British pantomime (where the Ugly Sisters are vamps played by comedians and the

handsome prince is in fact a strutting girl). Superannuated, androgyne appears as Tiresias in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* ("throbbing between two lives/Old man with wrinkled female breasts") and in an elliptical way underpins Ackroyd's latest book, *The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde*. "Although I possess the wonder of Miranda, I have also the faintness of Prospero who forswears his art as soon as life has quite matched his expecta-

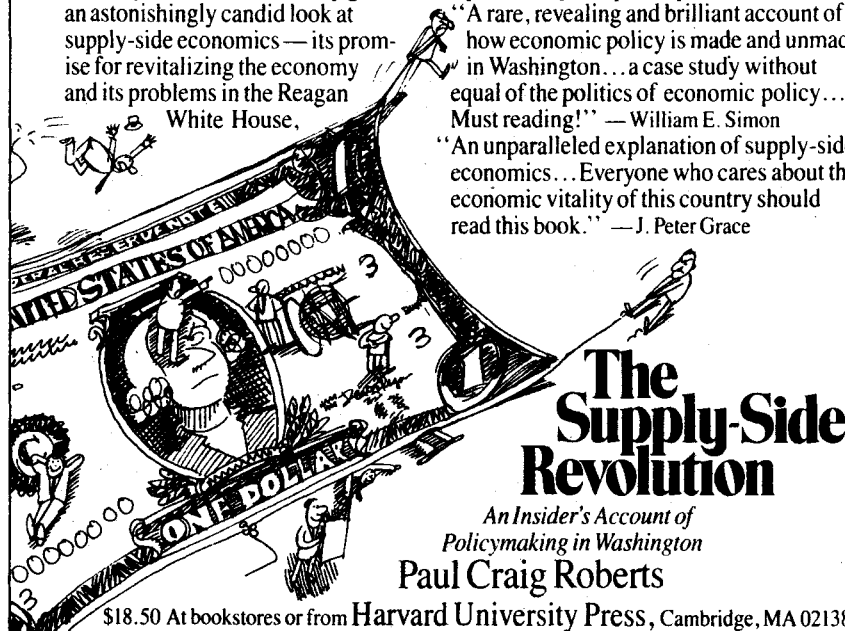
tions." In feature a Boer farmer, in manner a vestal virgin, as Wilde says of Walter Pater.

Wilde it is who throbs between two lives. On the one hand he was a famous author, aphorist of the Café Royale with a respectable wife and family; on the other he was a frequenter of male brothels, a wallower in his own sins. Ackroyd's novel pretends to be a journal of the writer's last few weeks when these two halves

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of his nature clashed together like fatal cymbals. His dandyism and fame were ruined and mocked by the discovery of his secret proclivities. "I have lied to so many people—but I have committed the unforgivable sin, I have lied to myself. Now I must try to break the habit of a lifetime."

Wilde has been on trial, imprisoned, and now exiled to the continent. He wanders Paris, bearing his past like a

curse. What makes *Last Testament* so breathtaking is that this invented diary is dangerously plausible. It is as though Ackroyd had been chosen as the amanuensis for Wilde's spectral jottings. He is sometimes more Wildean than Wilde. "I am an 'effect' merely: the meaning of my life exists in the minds of others and no longer in my own."

Throughout this novel, Wilde meditates upon the manner in which he

had invented disguises to protect himself only to discover that they proved treacherous and were used in evidence against him. "I took off one mask only to reveal another. I imagined that the world was mine; that there was nothing which I could not do. . . . But in truth . . . I was imprisoned by my success just as if I had been caught in a house of mirrors where, turning quickly about

myself, I saw only my own image."

Wilde was trapped in the filigree cage of his own cleverness. The duty of the pun, the maxim, and the lightning retort is to draw attention to itself. Wilde drew attention to himself to such an extent he expired under the scrutiny of self-generated spotlights. "The fact that a gilded mask was taken for the human face confirmed and strengthened the laws of my own being." Yet, as he confesses later, "When people believed in me, I ceased to believe in myself."

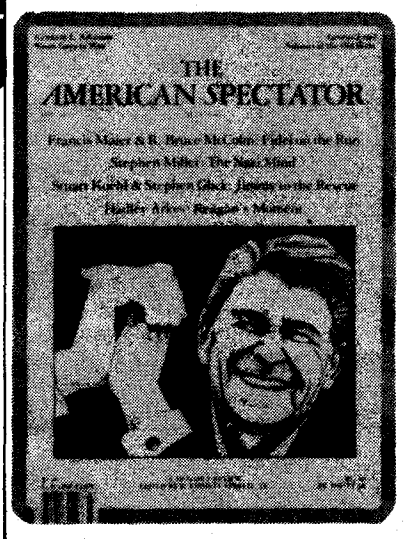
As Wilde's fame grew, the chasm between his private self and the public image likewise expanded. He tried to cope by becoming almost a caricature of the wisecracking fop who was, like the characters in his plays, "shielded by perfect sentences." It was thus a trauma to meet on an American train a grisly double. Wilde was apparently in the pay of D'Oyly Carte, helping to advertise *Patience*. "I woke one afternoon and left my compartment to purchase a sandwich, a fanciful lead-coloured thing, only to find John Howson, who played Bunthorne, that absurd caricature of myself, standing upon the observation platform dressed in a costume similar to my own and reciting one of my poems. We had stopped at a little station and the credulous population assumed at once that Howson was Wilde. I felt quite revolted."

Wilde's lifelong quest, as Ackroyd perceives, was to turn conversation into an art and his personality into a symbol. What in fact happened was that his personality became entangled in a drama which not even his conversation could outface. "Instead of mastering life, I allowed it to master me; instead of being the extraordinary dramatist which I was, I became an actor merely, mouthing the lines of others and those which fear and cowardice murmured to me." How do we know when an actor is acting? Wilde certainly could not have put an unevasive answer to this kind of discrimination.

His trials saw him pilloried: The version of himself which performed deeds shocking to Victorian England stripped the finery from the peacock he had striven to become. "When I entered the courtroom of the Old Bailey it was as if I were going upon a stage." The tragedy was that Wilde was neither the stage manager of his own performance nor placed within the safety of a script known to the actor in advance. "I have always worshipped at the altar of imagination, but I never believed that I would become a sacrifice upon it."

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is that the squalor which was the reality of Wilde's last days is transfigured into art. We see Wilde convert his degradation into a symbol of the theological Fall. He also views himself as a martyr, a stumbled messiah. He even affects a disinterested inquisitiveness about his own fate. "I became extremely curious about the world which had suddenly been revealed to me, for it seemed to be formed upon principles quite different from those I had imagined." We see Wilde erecting about himself verbal paradoxes and conundrums through which he intends to be redeemed. He was rising from his own ashes like an exquisite phoenix. But he is mortally ill. As the century turns it is not moral law which hounds him but diseases within his own body. He collapses into a delirious slumber and his last words are recorded by a friend: "I knew I should create a great sensation . . ."

Wilde hid himself in words. He highlighted the disguise with real costumes for "dress is the most complete representation of modern civilization." Decorousness betrays the sham within. The idea is an old one. Oswald in *King Lear* is sneered at because "a tailor made thee" and Parolles in *All's Well that Ends Well* is dismissed for "the soul of this man is his clothes." But Wilde's dressing up—both linguistic and sartorial—reflected the brilliance of his vital intellect. He hid himself in words for in sentences his personality could unfurl as in a sanctuary. He used language as Pope used a couplet: a machine to hide in which was simultaneously a weapon to wield. Ackroyd's Wilde is as fluent as the genuine article and in addition achieves wisdom from his humiliations.

Rust, sword; cool, blushes; and Parolles live
Safest in shame; being fool'd, by fool'ry thrive.
There's place and means for every man alive.

Wise Virgin cannot hope to compete with this, yet A.N. Wilson has scooped the literary awards. Wilde deflected the world's blows with epigrams. The more beleaguered he was, the wittier he became. Giles Fox, the hero in Wilson's novel, a librarian and medieval philologist, propagates, on the contrary, an unhealthy sourness. As a student he was arch and bitter. This affected carapace hardened into a firm characteristic when he failed to win a Fellowship at Cambridge. The disintegration of his marriages was merely par for the course.

Wise Virgin finds Giles middle-aged

and lonely, tinkering with a medieval religious tract called the *Tretis of Loue Heuenliche* which he is meant to be editing. However, his most recent disaster is the affliction of blindness, and so he is forced to hire an assistant who will transcribe his notes and take down his ideas.

Louise Agar, the recruited helper, had written a failed doctorate "on a subject of staggeringly peripheral importance." She is also personally unprepossessing. Dowdy, plump, and plain, she wins the scorn of Giles's daughter, Tibba, whose life has been lived through the heroes and heroines of books. With rather heavy symbolic aptness, Wilson has Tibba read *King Lear*. Recognizing the blindness motifs, we are informed "there was surely much of Giles in Lear." There is nothing of the kind. Parallels, such as they are, are parodic. Tibba loses the humility and wisdom of Cordelia to be wooed by the bounder Peverill.

Giles's cantankerousness is not that of unregarded age in corners thrown but the grumpiness of Timon of Athens.

The crux of the novel is Giles's coming to terms with his own bitterness. Wilson gives him the intriguing realization that the failures in his life stem from a subconscious self-destruct mechanism which "wanted things to go wrong from the first." The medieval *Tretis* begins to speak for the first time as literature and not as a bundle of grammatical idiosyncrasies. The blind scholar acknowledges he has been like a man who "casteth forth his ice like morsels: who is able to abide his frost?" Hints come that Giles might even be serene, like Milton who *On His Blindness* understands he will at least no longer have to regard "the world's vain mask." But the reader knows there will be another turn of the screw, for dotard Louise has inserted silently into Giles's *Tretis* howlers all of her own. □

WASHINGTON IRVING: HISTORY,
TALES, AND SKETCHES
Edited by James W. Tuttleton/Library of America Series,
distributed by Viking Press/\$27.50

Victor Anant

Just as it appears as if posterity is counterparodying a writer who parodied his times and as if observances for the bicentenary of his birth last April 3 had completely petered out with the dismantling of the exhibits in the New York Public Library third floor hallway, the sanguine spirit of the "New World's first man of letters" is reincarnated again. Or so it seemed to this literary pilgrim returning, on a windy and appropriately spooky November 28 morning, to the village which bears his name, after having performed a solitary ritual of ancestor-worship at his grave in the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in neighboring Tarrytown. And with a magical touch of necromancy the Library of America Series, honoring America's foremost writers, now pays tribute in a handsome volume to four works of Washington Irving in their original, outspoken, robust versions.

Americans are blessed to have been given, in the infancy of their nationhood, a writer with a romantic and comic piety. Like Don Quixote mount-

ing his nag Rosinante to set off on mythic crusades, Irving ruffled the feathers of contemporary prophets and upset their followers without mocking their faiths. He refused to play god: He played "the holy fool." Where others, like the poet Philip Freneau, the moralist Emerson, the devoutly tormented Nathaniel Hawthorne, the naturalist philosopher Thoreau, all took some kind of passionate stand or other, Irving accepted a commission from the self-made millionaire furrier John Jacob Astor, moved to an old Dutch farmhouse "as full of angles and corners as an old cocked hat" in a bend on the Hudson River, and went on writing biographies, travelogues, and constantly revising, de-vulgarizing, in edition after edition, his biting early work. Edited with meticulous notes by James W. Tuttleton, this commemorative edition of Irving's *Letters of Jonathan Oldstyle, Gent.*, *Salmagundi*, *A History of New York*, and *The Sketch Book* resurrects Irving and places him in perspective, as a truly original American pioneer.

To the native American there must

have been something subversively alien in the work of a humorist who anticipates Chaplin, Nathanael West, Damon Runyon, and others who have not plodded the beaten paths of country humorists. Perhaps deliberately, Washington Irving pioneered an American concept: the package deal. His sources were always secondary; his style playfully imitative of the old world; his feel of the pulse, his timing, impeccable; his instincts reverential; his wickedness never malicious; he represented the abiding virtues of "limitations." The package never burst at the seams.

Irving lived and wrote in concentric circles. He grew up learning to play the flute at a time when the American Revolution had drawn to a close: George Washington had entered New York to the blare of trumpets and drums, brass and plumery. This youngest son of a dour Scottish Presbyterian commercial family had been whimsically named after the great hero. The family had prospered through two decades of turmoil, and had been a safety net of silken ropes. Irving, a spoilt child, hated school and refused to go to college. From the age of sixteen, he says, he wandered around the nooks and crannies of little New York. "I knew every spot where a murder or a robbery had been committed or a ghost seen."

Like Kafka his early legal education, along with bronchial attacks, perhaps shaped the playful melancholy in all his writings, as if he is always arguing a flawed case. His early notebooks are full of moody passages, comic or picaresque folk tales, and the sudden, deadly, throwaway insight. By nineteen, he had already cultivated his "sense of the ridiculous." A dirty old man named Jonathan Oldstyle, Gent. had started lampooning pretensions of the New World in New York's *Morning Chronicle*, a paper edited by Irving's brother Peter. Soon his reputation as a scandalous wit had reached Philadelphia where he was hailed as the voice of young America pricking the jingoism of fashionable playwrights and their brave American sailors in love and war.

Because he worked close to the grain he raised the hackles of republicans, and while his precocious wit and dandyism won the ladies, his family decided to pack him off on a long discovery of Europe on the grounds of his weak health. He survived wild escapades, acquired a smattering of French, Italian, and also Spanish, the only language he seriously studied. And as he tasted the adventures of the road, he also consumed vast quantities of travel writing. He excited the curiosity of women, from novices in a convent to barmaids in inns to the for-

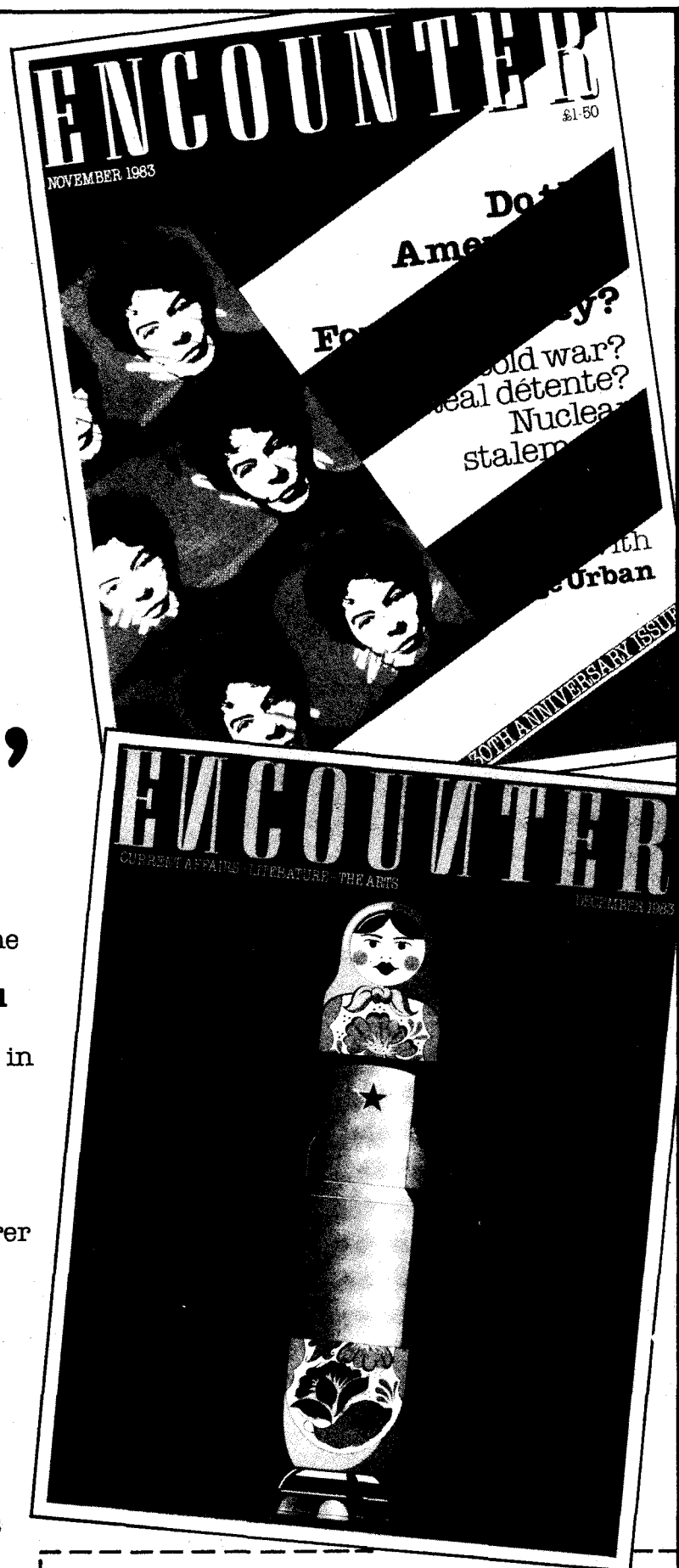
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midably literate Baroness de Staël.

In London he was seduced by the theater. He saw Sarah Siddons and carefully studied the calculated rudeness of *The Spectator*. Then, his sensual appetites sated, he says he yearned for "the tranquil domestic life." Back in the cozy nest of New York he and brother Peter launched *Salmagundi*. "In hoc est hoax, cum quiz et jokesez, et smokem, toastem, roastem folkesez, fee, faw, fum." Everyone should know what a *Salmagundi* is, the first issue said. For those who still do not, it is a devilishly spicy appetizer of chopped red meat, herring pickled, olives, onion, vinegar, and red pepper.

Salmagundi was closed a year later, after twenty issues. "From one end of town to another," a rival journalist from New England wrote, "all is nonsense and *Salmagundi*. America has never produced great literature—her products have been scrub oaks, at best. We should, then, encourage every native sapling; but when, like *Salmagundi*, it turns out to be a *bramble*, and pricks and scratches everything within its reach, we naturally ask, why it encumbereth the ground."

However, it was Irving's *A History of New York from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty*, by Diedrich Knickerbocker, published in 1809, which really carved out a place both for him and American literature in the market that mattered: the Old World. He completed it after the death of Matilda, daughter of a New York attorney, Josiah Hoffman, whom he had hoped to marry. He remained a bachelor. Knickerbocker mixed legend with local color. The family business, it must be remembered, was in wine, sugar, hardware and in auctioneering. Irving's facts were adulterated; his style was sweetened and polished; he hammered the gavel and sold.

In *A History of New York*, Irving spared no one, as the earlier version now available again in the Library of America series shows. The laughing philosopher who had earlier satirized even Thomas Jefferson for "impaling butterflies and pickling tadpoles" had New York in uproar. Emerson deplored its shallow Dutch wit, and Walt Whitman called it feeble burlesque. But the London *Athenium* called this comic epic "an honest and manly attempt to found an American literature." Sir Walter Scott said his sides were sore with laughter; Dickens wore his copy threadbare; Coleridge stayed up all night to finish it. It made an unprecedented profit, about three thousand dollars, and went into a sec-

ond edition in 1812, a third in 1819.

"The umbilical cord is severed. America is indeed independent," the *Athenium* said. On re-reading the unexpurgated versions it is remarkable how Irving sensed that what America had to offer then was the idea that life was a package deal; with all its ribbons and trimmings everything in the New World represented a multiple choice. Myth, fable, and legend; Swift, Cer-

vantes, Homer, Rabelais, Shakespeare, Aesop, the King James Bible, Tom Paine; extravagant and massively irreverent, Irving knew what he had done. Later, he kept revising to remove the bee-stings and coarseness—for a very worldly, and pragmatic, reason, namely, that the family business faced bankruptcy because of the economic instability created by the Napoleonic Wars.

Back in London, making literary pilgrimages and going up to Scotland to meet Sir Walter Scott, in 1818, this dandy came to the rescue of the Irvings. In 1820, the Reverend Sydney Smith was sneering, "Who the wide world over reads an American book?" Bits of *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* had been pirated from pamphlets in New York and had appeared in English periodicals. Irving



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decided to publish *The Sketch Book* at his own risk. The gamble paid. With prodding from Scott, the leading publishing house of John Murray then issued it in two lush volumes, and edition after edition raked a profit of more than £9,000 in one year.

The Sketch Book still offers refreshing discoveries. And a startlingly revelatory account of both the author and the Art of Bookmaking:

Thus, also, do authors beget authors, and having produced a good progeny, in a good old age they sleep with their fathers, that is to say, with the authors who preceded them—and from whom they have stolen.

Two of the four American themes are from German folklore, and two indulge in sepulchral ancestor worship of the Mana-hatta. The Indian, says Irving, “is formed for the wilderness as the Arab is for the desert.” Rip Van Winkle is the American male seen from abroad, an overgrown child, jolly, comic, likable, essentially immature, through the tragedy of a life slept away, ignorant of wife and the adult world. And, in his awakening, Irving celebrates the return of the practical man.

For 200 years what seems to have clung to his memory is the smell of success. Even academics treated his mammoth work, which went into forty editions, with a bemused spooky disdain. “Few writers have successfully stretched a small talent farther than Washington Irving,” a 65-cent pamphlet from the 1970s by a professor of English at Columbia (the university which bestowed on him its first Honorary Master of Arts) states in its opening sentence.

Indeed, until the end of his bicentenary year, the New World’s first man of letters was remembered more for his literary “real estate.” Sleepy Hollow Restorations, Inc., and the Tarrytown Hilton hosted a Bicentennial conference on “Washington Irving, Sunnyside and American Romanticism,” including “the romantic garden,” “the decorated interior,” “romantic villas and cottages”—all heralded by a warning poster that the Headless Horseman Rides Again.

It might yet, in retrospect, be one of Irving’s later biographies, *Mahomet and his Successors*, a two-volume narrative of “the life and founder of the Islam faith,” which will remain his most intriguing work. It was completed in 1849, before he devoted himself solely to the five-volume *Life of Washington*, finished in 1859. He died eight months afterwards, on November 28. Irving’s *Mahomet* was meant to be a general reader, he says.

Certainly, it is his most polemical work, unusual for a writer given to elegant ambiguities, and totally devoid of humor. He seems to have been haunted for over a quarter of a century by “the little cloud which rose out of the deserts of Arabia.”

If we are far from considering Mahomet the gross and impious imposter that some have represented him, so also are we indisposed to give him credit for vast forecast, and for that deeply concerted scheme of universal conquest which has been ascribed him. . . . Had he, indeed, conceived from the very outset the idea of binding up the scattered and conflicting tribes of Arabia into one nation by a *brotherhood of faith*, for the purpose of carrying out a scheme of external conquest, he would have been one of the first military projectors; but the idea of extended conquest seems to have been an afterthought.

The phrase italicized by Irving is the only one thus highlighted in this work of a historian as a *Haji*, or pilgrim.

It was this least known of his works, however, which Gandhi (who probably read not more than a dozen books in his life) was attracted by during his early days of political organization in South Africa. In his *Autobiography*, Gandhi says that Irving’s *Mahomet* raised “Muhammed in my estimation.” Gandhi had also read another Scottish writer, Thomas Carlyle, on the “Hero as Prophet.” Curiouser and curiouser, it was a family of Muslim Cutchi Memons who gave Gandhi employment in South Africa after he had qualified for the bar in England but could find no work on his return to India.

Gandhi, for all his charismatic qualities, remained (at least as I knew him in our early Congress apprenticeship in India) “a chuckling saint.” He, too, believed in only one god; he, too, was deeply aware that it is our humanity, our mortality, that consecrates our faith.

Perhaps God giggles at prophets, Washington Irving seems to say, because their followers will always damn them. May they Rest in Peace. □

EDITORIAL

(continued from page 7)

tain route to illusion and squalor. We do not have a proper hatred of illusion. So many of our public values are based on it. We do, however, generally loathe squalor. Why can we not deal as rigorously with narcotics as we did with cyclamates and such other allegedly insalubrious items?

The answer is to be found in politics. If ever one of the elite interest groups of the Republic makes the elimination of drugs an issue on its national agenda, drugs and all ambivalent references to them will be gone. Troubled Americans will have to find a less facile

route to ruin, and rogues like the doddering Timothy Leary will no longer be appearing on national television as he did on the “Today Show” some months ago, laboriously pontificating about his narcotized utopia. In light of our experience, it was as though Marx were to appear on television live from the Gulag sanguinely prophesying the dictatorship of the proletariat. □

CHEF KROC

Ray Kroc is gone. He died January 14. His controversial golden arches, however, endure from sea to shining sea and in nearly a dozen foreign countries. Even in Paris his McDonald’s hamburgers are on duty to serve hurried gastronomes, who gobble them up as gratefully as do the hamburger lovers of Bull Snort, Georgia or historic Des Plaines, Illinois, where the first of his McDonald’s hamburger production lines was established in 1955. At this very moment hundreds of thousands of his toothsome brown patties are hygienically en route from the griddle to the open mouths of expectant customers; and the journey is being expedited every step of the way by smiling young people freshly turned out in colorful McDonald’s livery. These hamburgers have no soybean additives, nor oatmeal, nor any of the other fillers that might tempt less scrupulous hamburger tycoons.

Chef Kroc saw to this. He vigilantly patrolled what became a string of 7,500 outlets, claiming annual sales of over eight billion dollars and employing well over 130,000 people by the early 1980s. He was the Henry Ford of the hamburger and he saw to it that his meticulously chosen franchise operators were all drilled in their art at his “Hamburger University” in Elk Grove, Illinois where diligence was rewarded with a “Bachelor of Hamburgerology” degree and “a minor in french fries.”

American fast food is one of the marvels of our culture. All around the world discriminating individuals of reasonable disposition extol it. I personally have observed sophisticated British journalists dining in the most venerable of London’s gentlemen’s clubs and reminiscing wistfully about esurient encounters with Kroc’s masterpieces, with Colonel Sanders’ *poulets*, and with other such incomparable viands. Yet Chef Kroc was the most innovative of all fast food tycoons, and he demanded quality at reasonable prices.

Nonetheless he was not unanimously honored in his lifetime. There were grumbles, always from those

ideological opportunists who claim to speak for the consumer and the common man even as they advance a dozen other of their left-wing panaceas. Philippics were written about Chef Kroc in the left-wing gazettes, and two of the most singleminded critics even ambushed him with a book, *Big Mac: The Unauthorized Story of McDonald’s*. For anyone busier than, say, a death row inmate I do not recommend it.

One wonders, what did this visionary make of the hostility that fizzled and popped against him? In artsy crafty communities his golden arches were deemed as abhorrent as nuclear power plants, though the white walls, the plate glass, and the pipe railings of Richard Meier raise few mutters. Food fanatics denounced the Big Mac in terms more vituperative than they could ever summon against narcotics, and a United States Senator even linked him to the perfidies of the Watergate era. Of course today in the halcyon days of the Reagan Renaissance these complaints stand exposed for the sour fanaticisms that they are, and the aforementioned senator has been sentenced to three years in the hoosegow for unrelated low deeds; but my guess is that to the very end this notable entrepreneur was without a clue as to the nature of the assault upon him.

The American business prodigy is often a sad case. Working solo or in alliance with scientists he has done more to improve American life than the politician, the professor, or practically any other species of working American. Yet he remains unloved and generally unlovable. He is always hard working and resourceful. Occasionally he is farseeing, and more often than not he is decent. Yet his range is very narrow. He devotes his life to improving and selling the widget. Usually he has no sense of the larger forces shaping his life and little inclination to affect them. When he tries he usually falls for the crackpot.

If he fancies himself progressive he merely opens his pocketbook to the ritualistic liberal. If he fancies himself a patriot he goes off on his own, writing doggerel to free enterprise or confecting some simple-minded theory for explaining the pathway to the American Dream. If you tell him that Aristotle or the Founding Fathers had a sounder grasp on matters he impatiently turns away and builds a million dollar institute to refine and popularize his personal monomania. The business prodigy usually confuses mastery of the what for mastery of the why. Chef Kroc entitled his autobiography *Grinding It Out*. He wrote it for the ages. □

VISIONS OF CAIRO

by Taki

Cairo—Although Arab Islamic history began in the Arabian Peninsula, it was in Cairo that Islam gained its legitimacy and fashioned a civilization. The bloodiest, simplest, and cruelest of religions suited the laid-back Cairenes to the proverbial T. Without Islam Cairo would have turned out more decadent than Los Angeles. With it, or in fear of Islam rather, the Cairenes outwitted and outwaited all conquerors, lulled their foes to sleep, charmed Turk, Anglo-Saxon, Frenchman, and Greek into making Cairo the last bastion of Christian-Moslem co-existence, and in the process managed to resist the excesses of Islamic law and Moslem tolerance.

I remember living here as a young man and hearing sophisticated foreigners admit that Cairo, not Paris or Oxford, was the magnet of Arab youth. This was the time of Nasser, the late fifties, and although in his dream of pan-Arabism Nasser tried to put the lights out, they remained lit, in universities, in the houses of cosmopolitan Egyptians, even along the Kasr-El-Nil, where the smart nightclubs and casinos are situated to this day.

These were the very same lights that led Moslem fanatics to murder the brave Anwar Sadat; and Qaddafi to be at first attracted and eventually repelled by Cairo and for what the ancient city stood. It is also why the rest of the Arab world was so quick to excommunicate and condemn Sadat after his historic trip to Jerusalem. Islamic fundamentalists like the Saudis, or Moslem totalitarians like Assad, view Egyptian tolerance and liberalism not unlike a vampire does a cross.

When I lived in Cairo in the fifties I used to spend my days playing tennis at the Gezira Sporting Club, my nights gambling at the Mohammed Ali. The latter was the most elegant private club in all of Africa. Old Levantine gentlemen would punt heavily but graciously, while servants in gold-rimmed djellabahs tiptoed silently through the cool, immense marble halls bringing drinks, Turkish coffee, and rahat lukums to the

Taki Theodoracopulos is The American Spectator's European editor.

gamblers. My father had inspected the scene and decided that nothing would change. After all, he figured, Nasser had come and nationalized everything and still life could be sweet and profits sweeter. But change it did. Our factories and businesses were nationalized (though with a smile). Fortunes were confiscated and the Mohammed Ali club became a tomb. When I left Cairo for good it was like deciding to kick a habit. Every time I would get a whiff of roasted peanuts, or smell jasmine, or hear a boat glide silently through water, Cairo came to mind. It was like catching the scent of a woman you had loved and lost.

In 1970 I returned for Nasser's funeral. I remember thinking that the city now seemed poorer: the people worse off, the housing dilapidated, and the beggars everywhere. I also remember arguing with a reporter who was there for the first time about what Nasser had done for his people. Needless to say, the hack was a liberal and as pig-headed and ignorant as any. "He gave them pride, pride, do you understand," he shouted at me. "Pride in losing three wars and having no food in their bellies and no clothes on their back," I answered, and he gave me the kind of look that lefties give when reminded that it is the Soviet Union that jails and tortures and kills people, not the good old USA.

Despite the condition I found Cairo in, I still felt that it was the only capital that could lead the Arab world. I was very pro-Palestinian in those days, and

the Palestinians I spoke with in Cairo in 1970, people like Mohammed Sid Ahmed, not only made sense, but had they been allowed to have a dialogue with the Israelis Sadat might have gone to Jerusalem six years earlier.

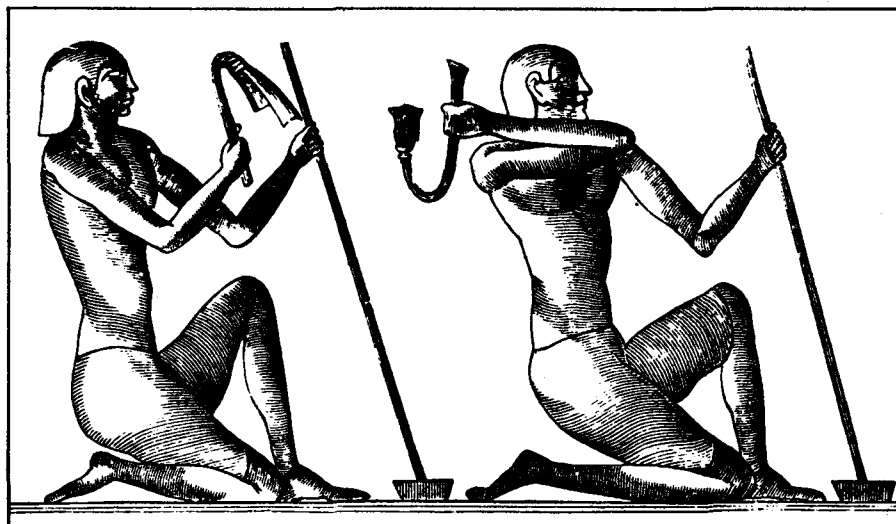
Responsible and wise Palestinians, however, are not a good bet to die of old age in that part of the world. The hard-liners and Moslem fanatics hate and want to weed them out more than they yearn to drive Israel into the sea. And things have gotten worse since the death of Sadat. The Shiites and the Sunni fundamentalists want to replace all secular governments with religious ones. The butcher Assad is now in cahoots with his counterpart in Iran simply out of convenience. The Assad faction is an Alawite tribe, and by allying himself with Khomeini Assad keeps his fifty percent Shiite majority quiescent. For the moment. If he ever gets out of Lebanon his days are numbered. Khomeini will cast the first stone.

Down in the Sudan Nimeiri got the message and he declared the Sharia the law of the land, even though more than a third of his subjects are Christians. Although Egypt's President Mubarak keeps a close watch on the Moslem Brotherhood and other Islamic fundamentalists and extremists, my personal guess is that he wants to live more than he wants to lead, or continue the peace process begun by his predecessor.

Mubarak is pragmatic and methodical. Everything he has done, and not done, has been well thought out. Whereas Sadat ruled pharaonically, Mubarak listens to popular opin-

ion, or pretends to anyway. In a country as backward as Egypt this is a bad thing. Mubarak knows that if he strays from the line the extremists allow him to toe, he will be as good as dead. Sadat knew it also, but that is the difference between great and mediocre men. The recent trip of Arafat was window dressing. Mubarak is not about to break diplomatic relations with Israel because he wants to keep all doors open and money channels clear. But Washington would be foolish to count on Mubarak in the crunch. He's got his hands full keeping the radicals at bay. Israel at least will not send a hit team, is his way of thinking.

This was in more ways than one an unlucky trip for me. I failed miserably in the karate championships I was competing in, and saw a side of the Egyptian public I never knew existed. They cheated and insulted all athletes but their own (and the Palestinians, who were admitted while Israel was not, and this, supposedly, was a world championship). Cairo today is still an authentic capital, still proud, but the 12 million people who have invaded it are about to give it the *coup de grâce*. The heat and dust were always there. Combined with industry and cars they make the ancient city a polluted, sweaty hellhole. The old sophisticated Cairenes are reeling, being shoved aside by hucksters whose pleasures are in acquiring Mercedes cars and flats in Helipolis with lots of stereo equipment, and whose women wear designer jeans. The old sensuality is gone. Even the traditional Egyptian hospitality has suffered. One now pays in advance in top hotels and waiters ask for cash before they serve drinks. There are laws against everything—in a vain attempt to control the tide of humanity—with the result that no one obeys anything, including the red traffic light rule. The quick-buck artist has prevailed. Where the Turk, the Frenchman, and the Englishman failed, he has succeeded. He is about to buy Cairo's soul. If he doesn't, the extremist will. Either way, Sadat might be the luckiest of men. He got out while the getting out was still good—and his dream alive. □



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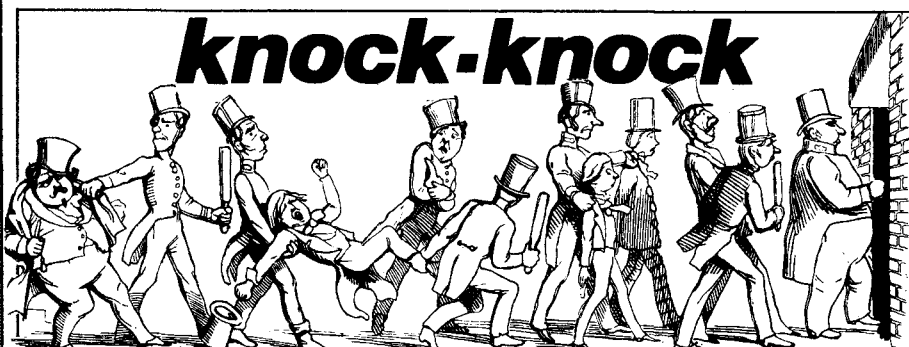
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The Austin American-Record

New Age charlatanry being practiced ardently and at a fat profit: Guru Phil Donahue at work in a famous auditorium abounding with neurotics, his favorite prey:

Most of the concerns Donahue expressed during his hour-long lecture were for women's issues. He said the greatest obstacle to the women's movement is the "male fear of the loss of power. . . ."

He pleaded with his audience not to consider him a "bleeding heart" or an "idealist." Columnist Art Buchwald has called him an "American hero" and Donahue vehemently argues for the underdog and for what are considered liberal causes.

"If I could start over again, I would have more women friends," he said. "I would not spank my kids. . . . I would learn to be a mother. . . . I would be more sensitive to homosexuals. . . . I would be present at the birth of my children."

He encouraged those lined up at four microphones placed around the Strahan Coliseum to express their opinions on topics they raised—the death penalty, war and patriotism.

Instead, they wanted his opinion on the topics or they wanted to laud him. . . .

Donahue, who describes himself as a feminist, predicted more changes—such as those in women's attitudes—because "more and more people are questioning authority. We don't like ourselves. We have a bad self-image. I think there is a real crisis of identity today."

He said no one group is responsible for inadequate education, family violence, crime, war and alcoholism.

"The biggest threat to this country isn't the Russians," he said. "It's our own inability to make democracy or capitalism work."

[November 5, 1983]

The Kansas City Star

A registered agent of the late Jesus Christ answers a reporter's inquiry as to whether she will follow a balanced approach to discussing nuclear warfare in the classroom:

"Not me," said Sister Anne Shepard, who teaches a social justice course to juniors at Bishop Miege High School in Roeland Park.

"The reason why there's poverty, racism, lack of educational opportunities and discrimination against the elderly and the handicapped is because 50 percent of our money is tied up in the military," she said.

"They (students) can get the other side any way they turn. This (her class) is news to them."

[November 15, 1983]

The Macon Telegraph and News

Prime-time entertainment is experienced by the Rev. Leigh Ann Raynor of the United Methodist Church, Inc. who invited "eleven young people, their ages ranging from 9 to 23," to her

parsonage to enjoy *The Day After*.

The Rev. also has a master's of divinity degree from Candler School of Theology and "a second degree brown belt in karate" to go along with her television set:

We laughed and talked during the first hour of the movie. We ate potato chips and brownies. We drank Coke and Mountain Dew and exchanged what little information we had, or thought we had, about nuclear weapons. We identified with the farming scenario, and we remarked that the people in the movie seemed just like us.

Then we saw the missiles being launched, and we understood that there was little time left before those people who seemed just like us would be dead. We saw the mushroom cloud of the attack and the people being instantly burned. Suddenly, there was no more laughing or joking or talking or eating potato chips or drinking Coke. The room grew deathly quiet as we watched. The only sounds were an occasionally whispered, "Oh God. Oh my God."

We saw the little boy blinded by the blast. Laura, age 9, asked innocently, "But, did the little boy die too?" It must have seemed to her that somehow the innocent, blameless little ones should have been spared—immune in some way. It seemed that way to me, too.

The ice-maker in the kitchen loudly dropped a cube of ice. Libby jumped and screamed, and we began to laugh. We had to. The tension was too great to only sit and watch.

"Will the dog die too?" Laura asked. Yes. The dog will die too.

"Oh no." Someone groaned as she saw a man walking in the fallout, and she realized that he would soon be dead. "Why didn't he stay inside?" she tried to rationalize. "For how long?" I asked her, gently, I hope.

The scenes wouldn't stop, and they wouldn't go away. We saw the burned skin and the hair falling out. The young people gasped, and some turned their faces away, as if by doing so it would somehow make it all untrue. "It seems like they would wise up, doesn't it?" asked Rochelle. "Who?" I asked. "All of us," she replied quietly. Yes. It does seem that way, doesn't it? . . .

The horror continued. One girl got up and left the room to walk outside for a while. Sometimes the only sounds in the room were the barely audible whispers saying, "Oh gross," and "Oh my God, no, no." I remarked that in the aftermath of the attack, black and white people were living together side by side. "I hope it doesn't take something like this to bring us together," Michael remarked. So do I.

Finally, mercifully, it was over. We watched in silence as the two men in the film held each other. There was no more joking or eating or laughing. There was only silence in the room, and in that silence I realized that we were worshiping together. For even the briefest of moments there was true worship—worship in spirit and in truth. In that brief, powerful moment, our minds and hearts and our very souls turned away from hate and war and thoughts of revenge, and turned instead to peace on earth, good will toward men and women.

In that moment we turned back to a God who is a God of peace, a God of life, a God of love and a God of hope.

The young people went home, and there alone in my den, I was afraid. Somewhere in the back of my mind I kept hearing God saying, "Do not fear, only believe." And I kept hearing myself answer Him, "Lord, I believe. Help Thou my unbelief."

[December 3, 1983]

The Boston Globe

Third World analysis found in the pages of the illustrious *Globe* of Boston:

This is a city where anything you want—a job, a contract, a trash can for your home, books for your school, a cop to protect your business—depends on who you know in City Hall. When whites say that Washington's election would mean the blacks will "get it all," they are in effect acknowledging their guilty understanding that, in the past, blacks got next to nothing. They can not believe that the dispossessed will be more generous than their long-time masters.

Like other areas that retained a colonial-style government far too long, Chicago has awakened to the possibility of revolution. And it is tearing the city apart.

[April 3, 1983]

National Catholic Reporter

Why Albania and Upper Volta remain Albania and Upper Volta in the eyes of a devout historicist at the *National Catholic Reporter*:

The thesis here is that a few—individuals and nations—are, and plan to remain, the beneficiaries of the information revolution. This is how it was in the wake of the printing press, the railroads, the whole industrial revolution, each successive "step forward." There have always been elites in a position to exploit new developments, and this exploitation entailed keeping the real benefits of the new discoveries from others. It is such a commonplace by now—the tale of the haves and the have-nots—but communications seem so all-benefiting and democratic that people may tend to sit passively (and the new technologies breed passivity) while some of their remaining birthright goes, so to speak, down the tubes. It is, after all, the eve of 1984. It will not happen as in the book of that name, but it is happening already in other ways.

[November 4, 1983]

The Milwaukee Journal

In the correspondence page of the eminent *Milwaukee Journal* the Thomas Paine of Stevens Point waxes hortatively:

Run on, George McGovern, keep plugging away and never give up, because we cannot afford to give up on all that is good and wonderful about America.

Run on, George, spread the word again that America can be redeemed, that the dignity of the person is not forgotten, that desperados lose in the end, that good guys can finish first.

Do it again, George, even if our dreams were shattered in '72. I'll stand by you,

because, to quote Ted Kennedy, "The dream will never die."

Dream on, George. Someday we shall overcome.

Patrick Henry Dunn
Stevens Point

[October 19, 1983]

The New York Daily News

New currents of thought waft through the sociological community:

Stealing office pens, cheating on expenses or letting the company pick up private bills is healthy and should be continued, according to a study made public today.

Cheating increases job satisfaction, raises work production and makes for a healthier economy, according to Gerald Mars, who chronicled workplace crime in a study entitled "Cheats at Work."

Mars, who heads the Middlesex Polytechnic Center for Occupational and Community Research, published his study after 10 years of research in more than 30 jobs, including working as a waiter, a dockworker and a fairground attendant.

In his study, Mars divides cheating workers into four categories—wolves, vultures, hawks and donkeys.

[September 27, 1983]

The New York Times

On Thanksgiving Day 1983, Wimp wisdom prevails in the lead editorial of America's newspaper of record:

Happy Thanksgiving? "If you believe in such a thing, you haven't met my ex-mother-in-law," says an Englishwoman who married an American. "She used to tell me that I had nothing to be thankful for. It's an *American* holiday. And then you should have heard her when the men started moving chairs around to watch football on TV."

Happy Thanksgiving? A friend from New England still can't think of Thanksgiving without a jolt, remembering the time his wife, impelled by seasonal altruism, invited her first husband to dinner.

All too often, Thanksgiving turns out to be a time when people have to leave their families to play in holiday concerts out of town. When the fuses blow, leaving a half-cooked turkey congealing in the electric oven. When some people suffer from acute appendicitis, or from acute memories.

Many people will no doubt find undiluted happiness and warmth today. Blessings to them. For the rest, it may help to recognize how often Thanksgiving in practice falls short of the theory, and to moderate expectations accordingly. Even if the day turns out bleak or troubled, one will not be alone. That's something to be thankful about.

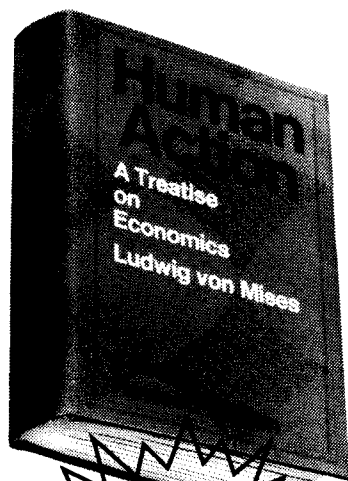
[November 24, 1983]

The Daily Gleaner

A great Canadian daily reports yet another modern peril well in advance of the offending season:

Singing Christmas carols in classrooms can be harmful to non-Christian students, the Commons committee on racism was told Tuesday.

[October 12, 1983]



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